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AN ADVENTUROUS
JOURNEY

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MEXICO AS I SAW IT

AMERICA AS I SAW IT

HYDE PARK: ITS HISTORY AND ROMANCE

A WINTER JAUNT TO NORWAY

THROUGH FINLAND IN CARTS

BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS

PORFIRIO DIAZ: EIGHT TIMES PRESIDENT OF
MEXICO

FROM DIAZ TO THE KAISER

THIRTEEN YEARS OF A BUSY WOMAN'S
LIFE

WOMEN THE WORLD OVER

MY TABLECLOTHS: REMINISCENCES

WOMEN AND SOLDIERS

A WOMAN ON FOUR BATTLE FRONTS

A GIRL'S RIDE IN ICELAND

GEORGE HARLEY: THE LIFE OF A LONDON
PHYSICIAN

SUNNY SICILY

MAINLY EAST, etc.

AN
ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY
RUSSIA—SIBERIA—CHINA

By
MRS. ALEC-TWEEDIE
F.R.G.S., F.R.C.I.



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P R E F A C E

This book was first published in 1926. Things have not changed much either in Russia or China, but in this abridged edition footnotes have been added in which the present state of both these countries has been brought up to date. It is, to me, a melancholy satisfaction to note that the prognostications I made from data gathered on the spot have been verified by subsequent events.

My first visit to China, that Land of Romance, started on the 1st of January, 1924, when I entered from Japan and Korea in an armed train.

My second visit started on 7th June, 1925, at Harbin, in North Manchuria, after circling the world again and crossing Russia and Siberia. China was then suffering from a renewed wave of "Anti-Foreignism," much after the style of the Boxer rebellion of 1900 ; riots had occurred in Treaty Ports a week before, and more were expected.

Since then Russia has remained in a state of utter misery, with signs of growing discontent among her peasantry, engendered by the hunger and poverty thrust upon them by mad politicians.

China has moved a tiny step forward ; she has, at any rate, shown the wish and ambition to improve.

Japan has gone ahead ; her general efficiency is indeed the outstanding disciplinary factor for law and order in the Far East.

E. ALEC-TWEEDIE.

London.

March, 1929.

AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

CHAPTER I

HELL

Russia in revolution—A game of bluff—Starving children—Dirty paper receptacles—No one lives in his own house—Girls of fifteen Mothers—State seriously alarmed—Vodka to pay taxes—World revolution—Jewels stolen from the Churches—Owners butchered while their treasures were stolen—Everyone arrested—The cruelties of the G.P.U.—Thousands of Government officials—An agitating moment in the Post Office—Our misinformed, but well-intentioned, Communists—Russia has little money and no prospects.

OUT OF HELL. . . . Yes, that is the only way to describe one's feelings on leaving Soviet Russia at Harbin in China, after weeks of anxiety, horror, depression and amazement.

I have been in many tight corners in my life : in Mexico, Constantinople, the Lebanons, Damascus, Sudan, Ceylon, Morocco, the Punjab, and often under fire, but never for one moment have I lost heart, or felt the situation well-nigh unendurable, till that trip across Siberia. Twice before I had visited Russia, so I knew Russia before the Revolution of 1917.

Never, never in all my world travels have I seen such heartrending sights as I saw in those hideous days in Moscow, and worse, yes, worse, in far-away Siberia. A scene in a quiet square beggars description, and my pen refuses to put in on paper. Oh, the ugliness of it all. Those scenes haunt me still.

Half-starved, diseased children, dressed in bits of sacking, with their skin showing through the rents, were imploring for food in dear old Moscow. People trying to sell a few cigarettes, or potatoes, as hawkers, were being chased and run-in by the police. That seemed to be going on all the time. Men, women and children lay huddled on doorsteps asleep at night. Old men and women with a newspaper across their shoulders for warmth. Homeless—tens of thousands of half-starved living beings homeless—think of it. And foodless too. And all the time their

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Government was screwing taxes out of everyone, and spending the money upon its own laudation in foreign lands. What a huge game of bluff.

And as a set-off to the scenes in the back streets—for the front streets are fairly respectable—were trucks of boys and girls waving red flags, amid large branches of green foliage; these were being driven through the chief roads to impress occasional foreigners. Here was a sort of travesty of the wonderful British creation of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, called by the Russians "Patriots." "The same sort of thing as your Scouts," a young Soviet explained to me. The same sort? I wondered where the similarity came in. It was not in their manners or their aims.

Millions of diseased children with revolution in their souls, including revolution against their own parents and homes, and they are taught to "educate their fathers and mothers in Soviet doctrines."*

More people have already been killed by the Revolution than in the Great War.

Yes, it was instructive to see these lorries of children on Sundays and hear them shouting their Hymns of Hate, out for a holiday jaunt. These young people were the future hopefuls of Russia. The girls wore red calico handkerchiefs over their heads, and the boys Turkey Red scarves round their throats. The sexes from the earliest ages are educated together, and the result has not been quite a moral one.

But these are the children the kind British and Americans saved from starvation, while the Soviet Government saved their roubles and evaded doing the job themselves, preferring to sell their grain outside. Russia collected the charitable money by that perfect propaganda of which they are such masters.

"See our happy children," a young Soviet enthusiast remarked. "See how we take our children to museums on Sundays—one of our holidays, you know—and teach them. You never do anything of that kind in England. *Our* museums are the only free museums in the world."

"What?" I exclaimed.

"The only free museums in the world," he repeated.

"Why, my good young man, all the museums in the world are free."

*The Soviet system of government is not Socialism, but "the dictatorship of the proletariat."

"Oh, no," he replied. "It is only in Russia under the Soviets that museums are free."

I looked at him in amazement.

"Free," he continued. "We are the only people in the world who open our museums free to the people." I gasped.

"Do you believe that?" I faltered.

"Of course I do, my Soviet teacher told me so."

"Well, it is a lie," I rudely replied. "All museums are open free. I know most of the museums of the world. Those of Rome, Madrid, Paris, London, Berlin, New York, Bombay, Rio de Janeiro—nearly all the museums the world over are open free, young man. You had better go and travel and see for yourself."

"Oh, no," he persisted. "Russia is the only country who opens her museums free for the people, or opens them on Sundays."

And he believed it.

"Look at these new receptacles for dirty paper the Government has put up," continued my volunteer Soviet guide.

One looked. One stared at a sort of drain pipe, into which dirty paper was thrust to breed mosquitoes at the bottom, for there was no possible way of emptying the ridiculous thing. It was actually chained to the wall, for otherwise it would have been stolen, like the brushes and combs in the dressing rooms of hotels in America.

"You never have things like that," he cried triumphantly. Again one stood dumbfounded.

"First," one replied, "because our people are too well trained to throw rubbish about in the streets; secondly, because in all our parks and open spaces and stations we have open basketwork wire receptacles for rubbish, which are cleared regularly. Besides which our wire baskets can be cleared absolutely, and no germ can be left lurking behind as in your solid wet tin bottles."

And then came the gem. The Government has not put them up at all, but individual householders have been *ordered* to put them up at their own expense, just as individual householders are obliged to light the street in front of their own front doors in Russia, and plant trees if the streets are considered suited for trees, and replant them if they die. It is just a form of "squeeze" or "graft," that the bankrupt Bolshevik government has

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adopted. They get extra taxes out of the people by "ordering" dirt receptacles, or avenues of trees, or street "lighting."

Ye gods—this was freedom.

No one lives any longer in his own house.

Why should he? asks the Soviet. There are two millions of people in Moscow and they want homes. Houses are communal property. Therefore every house, big or small, is measured out in square feet, and into so many square feet so many persons have to be packed "by order of the Soviet Government."

In some cases of big houses, the owner has been allowed to keep one room, and that in a dwelling which has perhaps been in his family for generations. Perchance he has chosen the drawing-room as the most airy. Well, that contains so many square feet; so father, mother, son of twenty-six and daughter of sixteen must all herd together therein. They must share the kitchen with others who have been allotted space in their fine old home, and must in turn attend to the communal heating stove. The bath also is communal—and generally filthy.

If the former owners have been allowed to keep some wardrobe, screen, or bureau, they probably divide the old room into two, and the men sleep on one side, the women on the other. But these square-foot divisions are not always of a family nature, and strangers are "allotted" this 9 square feet of floor space and have to live together, regardless of birth, or education, or sympathies. By "order of the Government" humanity is literally herded together,

For educated people to be allotted foot space like this is hard. There is not room even for their prized books and bibelots; no wall space for their family portraits or old embroideries worked by former generations, and up to now so carefully guarded as family heirlooms. Wealth is merely relative. If one has been accustomed to a large house and much space, one has become as accustomed to it as to the fact that one's hair is brown. If one has never had a motor car one cannot miss it. If one has never had a fine house or servants one does not know either the joys, or the anxieties and responsibilities such possessions afford; but to lose amenities that have become part of one's life is a serious affliction.

If one has never had clean sheets one does not miss clean

sheets. If one has lived with a marble staircase and cherished its possession and kept it scrupulously polished and clean, it is heart-breaking to see it left filthy and chipped and broken and destroyed because it has become the property of "the people." Such is happening every day in Russia, where no one is allowed to live alone with his own family in his own home. All the big houses in Leningrad and Moscow are now communal. No one lives any longer in his own home. Everything is shared from houses to wives and families.

Another imposition by "order of the Government" decides when your house should be whitewashed or done up. The tenant is never considered or asked if a date will be suitable. Workmen arrive. I saw them. Pails of whitewash were spluttered everywhere, and to my cost the splutters refused to come out of a blue serge coat, and left it all over white spots. These men work for eight hours as slowly as they can, and apparently as badly as they can. They belong to the Government.

Maybe there were once a couple of hundred thousand educated people in Moscow before the Revolution. With few exceptions they are dead, or out of the country earning their living as nurses or chaffeurs. God help them. God help the sordid, miserable, low-class people left behind. Never, never once in all those hideous days did I see one happy face or hear one person laugh.

Again, I never, never saw so many children under five in all my life. Girls of fifteen seemed to have children; women of fifty seemed to have children—and what children. Yes, little school girls in their school dresses, linked arm in arm in the streets, little girls of fourteen or so, about to become mothers.

No wonder Russia became alarmed at the vastly increasing degenerate population it had encouraged.

Boys of adolescence and girl-children, pushed into Free Love, had had babies born to them like rats or rabbits—under-sized degeneracy from undeveloped, underfed child-parents. Numbers died at childbirth. Numbers more were left in the hospitals for the State to bring up as the future hope of Russia.

At the time I was there in May, 1925, the State was becoming seriously alarmed. Too many thousand children had been thrust on it for its purse—and such children. They became seriously afear'd. They trembled for the

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future of Russia filled with such degenerates, and they had no money to feed the constant flow of babies. Hence "Sexual abstinence" was being preached in the Press as hard as "Free Love" had been recommended five short years before. Another Communist dream that failed.

Or again, Vodka had been stopped by the Tzar. Cash was wanted, so back came Vodka under the Soviet regime, and very highly taxed too.

When will Russia realize that she has had to renounce almost every one of her own immature theories, and cease spreading them to the destruction of other lands?

A dozen times a day one asked oneself: How is this chaos going to end? How is all this destruction of home and religion and parenthood and respectability going to finish? What is to be the issue of this frightful experiment? Are all these unhappy-looking people to be sacrificed to a scheme? Are these thousands of men in office, offices doubled and trebled since the Tzarist days, and now filling all the finest houses in Moscow, to fatten on these human half-starved, homeless dregs? The thing has become a veritable nightmare. End it must. But how?

And for such sights had one struggled to come to Russia.

In the spring of 1925, after being subjected to six months Red Tape delay from the Soviet Consulate in London, I was able to secure a *transit* Passport through Russia and Siberia to return to China. Every possible obstacle was placed in my way; it seemed as if the Soviet authorities were ashamed of their country and were desperately anxious that no one should see it. As subsequent events proved this was not without good reason.

WORLD REVOLUTION.

Those two words literally haunt one in Russia and Siberia. They are placarded up. They are on everyone's lips. They appear in every play. They are shrieked in vulgar songs at music halls. They resound throughout the country; and the people are told they mean "freedom, success, happiness, great achievements and that they, the Soviets, and they alone, can bring about this millennium."

How different is the truth from the fable.

Russia is to be congratulated most heartily on her "news agencies." Her distribution of propaganda is simply marvellous. She ladles out daily the most amazing bluff to the whole world. She dips her spoon into different cauldrons of eye-wash and discreetly runs her serial story of the wonders of Russia and the Soviets into each country, exactly in the form she thinks that country will swallow her potion best. Marvellous. And most marvellous of all, there actually are people who believe the oft-repeated dose. Repeat a thing often enough—even an advertisement for soaps and pills—and the public believe.

The world has never known such perfect advertisement as emanates from Soviet Russia. At that game the Soviet Russian is supreme. He is a master of the art; to-day his chief revenue has accumulated through the sales of other folks' property or by stealing the gorgeous jewels and laces and embroideries from the once magnificent Greek church,* or in a minor way by saving food and bandages supplied by kindly people and sold to buy ammunition for his Press guns, goes to the furtherance of propaganda. But in spite of this wondrous advertisement one "accomplished reform" after another is being given up in Russia herself as unworkable.

The people may even slink quietly back to church—and pray.

They do.

Everyone is run in or arrested everywhere and all the time. In fact it became quite a common sight, even in the main streets, where an endeavour is made to put a good face forward, for the foreigner to be duly impressed, arrests are commonplace. Prison without trial and death to follow are constant. Cruel, cruel.

* In 1927 some mysterious Russian Crown jewels appeared, and were sold in London for the Soviet Government; and in the winter of 1928, tens of thousands of pounds' worth of wonderful pictures, furniture, and objets d'art were sold in Berlin. The Soviets kindly acknowledged "they wanted money and had taken these Russian art treasures—447 of them—from the Leningrad museums and palaces, including the famous Hermitage Art Gallery, and others. The auctioneers acted on behalf of the Soviet Trade Delegation. The catalogue says that "Public art collections have been enriched by the confiscation of private collections." Yes. They butchered the owners while their treasures were stolen.

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The traveller is well guarded, and well looked after, and fathered and shown exactly what is good for him to see, and nothing more. This is just about as cleverly managed as in Japan, where a number of Russians arrived; they put a cordon of police round them when they landed, and never left them day or night.

It did the trick. The Russians blustered, were furious—and finally discreetly went home again.

China let them in and is now trying to get them out.

Arrests are common. A white collar even arouses suspicion, and decent clothing is so expensive it is almost unknown.

Police arrive at any home, walk in, demand to see so-and-so, and before so-and-so knows anything he is simply marched off, and if his wife is out she returns to find her husband gone, while one of the many neighbours—stuffed into the allotted square feet of the house—kindly explains that they “think he was taken by the police.” The man away a month perchance, the wife and children may be left to starve, and often are.

There is an old monastery on the White Sea, which now contains 8,000 Russian political prisoners. These people have practically all been arrested lately, and as there is no more room, arrangements are now being made to accommodate 2,000 more. There they die by inches. They are so badly fed that it almost amounts to starvation, but they are made to work until they drop.

The G.P.U. is a sort of State Political Department. It has taken the place of the Cheka, which was so much dreaded under Lenin, but the G.P.U. is ten times more severe than the Cheka ever was, and is a thousand times more dreaded from North to South, from East to West. It deports the able-bodied to Siberia like criminals, seeing that they are more useful as manual labourers than as dead men; so it takes one or more members of the family according to their capacity to work. I have seen them peering through the bars of the railway carriages in Siberia. Others are discarded. Everyone, everywhere, says “Hush.” There are spies in every corner; even the keyhole is unsafe, so the only hotel in Moscow without bugs has a flap to let down against inquisitive eyes and ears—yes, a flap to cover the keyhole of every stranger’s room in the one and only hotel. Foreigners are sent there. It was terribly expensive. A cup of tea or a bath cost

7s. 6d. Four or five pounds a day the cheapest rate and the hotel full of spies.

"I shall suffer for these few minutes' chat with you," said an old London friend at a small halting-place outside a town. "The police will send for me, and demand to know why I came to see you, what we talked about, if you asked any questions and what answers I gave."

Think of that in our free lands, my friends. Think of that.

Apropos of the Secret Service, a naughty little story relates that a Russian child was being asked at school to name the chief towns of America: "New York; Washington; Boston," and then she hesitated.

"Well?" asked the teacher. She still hesitated, and then, pulling a face, said "Chi-cag-o"—which to her sounded almost the same as the much-dreaded "Che-ka."

Naughty little girl.

As an instance of the way foreign Trades Unions who offer contracts are bluffed, there was a German deputation which went not long since to Charkov, the capital of the Ukraine. On the morning of their arrival, the G.P.U. arrested all beggars and vagrants, even the poor little street hawkers, of whom there are thousands, and sent them off fifteen versts into the country. Consequently, when the deputation arrived, the good Germans were delighted that they saw no beggars at all, and found that the town of Charkov was most prosperous. More than that, the journey they travelled by train—these poor bluffed German delegates—was equally prepared for them; the stations were cleared of all signs of poverty and distress, and properly dressed up and cleaned up for their gratification. So they went home and flooded their newspapers with what they saw of the success of Russia under the Bolsheviks.

There is a tax of two shillings for getting up on the wrong side of a tramcar.

There is a two shilling tax if you walk on the wrong side of the road.

There is a thirty-four shilling tax to be a dressmaker, whether you have any dressmaking to do or not. And this sort of thing applies to other trades. Everyone and everything is fined.

And there are certainly more government clerks and government officials and government impedimenta than

anywhere else in the world. All supporting and helping one another.

The post office is State-owned. Let our public repair themselves to Moscow, the capital of Russia, or worse, to the capital of Siberia, and after trying to buy the simplest stamps in either town they will dub every offending British post office official an angel of gracious courtesy.

Talking of post offices, a queer thing occurred. I had been struggling with Russian money, and Russian stamps, and had just turned away from the counter when a lady, a real lady with hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, very shabbily dressed in what had once been good clothes, accosted me.

"Madame, vous parlez français?"

"Mais oui," I replied.

"Pardon, Madame, mais voulez-vous me faire une grande faveur?"

"Certainement, si c'est possible de mon part."

And then, coming closer, and in a more subdued tone, her hand clasped over her bosom.

"Voulez-vous envoyer une lettre en France pour moi?"

For the moment I thought she wanted a stamp, this well-mannered, well-spoken Russian lady with an exquisitely modulated voice; but no—she wanted me to get a letter to France for her.

"Mais c'est impossible, Madame," I explained, knowing that every letter that goes in or out of Russia is censored.

"Impossible!" she cried, "but to me, Madame, it is a question of life and death."

It was an awful moment. What could I say? What could I do?

"I dare not," I replied, knowing my own precarious position, that I was being watched, and dare not even write and post my own letters. "Besides, it might harm you instead of helping you."

Never, never shall I forget that woman's look of despair. Her face appeared even more wan, her eyes more sunken as I stammered: "I dare not, Madame."

"Oh, Madame, je vous prie," she whispered imploringly.

"Je ne puis pas," I brutally repeated. "Je ne puis pas," and really I felt both for her sake and mine I dare not handle that missive hidden in her blouse.

"Merci, merci, Madame, je comprends," she murmured as she turned away, and I saw the tears drop.

Often I have wondered since was I right or wrong ?

Her face still haunts me. Poor soul, perhaps death has mercifully claimed her.

Was I right to refuse ?

The largest, indeed most of the Moscow shops, have been confiscated bag and baggage without redress by *the State*. There is no competition and the prices are appalling.

May I never again in all my life have to enter a State-owned shop anywhere. One positively cringes before such insolence.

GREAT GOLD FIND IN SIBERIA

Alas, people outside will believe, and put their money into it. They will not be told there are no rails to move the gold, nor people to work the gold, nor machinery to exploit the gold. They will be given inflated puff-balls and swallow them, and they will not be allowed to go and see the realities for themselves—or if they do, everything will be carefully prepared for them. A few foreign aeroplanes may bring out a little ore, and that story as usual will be multiplied to thousands of tons of gold.

Had I only known how depressing that stay would be, I would not have asked for that permission. In Russia to-day men and women come up in the streets and implore one to help them. In railway carriages, anywhere, everywhere, they ask for aid.

Said a woman in answer to my question : What would happen to all these bare feet when the winter cold came ? “ Let us hope the sufferers will be dead, for life to them is already a living death.”

When one gazed at those faces—wan, thin, haunted, never a smile anywhere, one felt the irony of it all.

And withal £5,000 at a time is sent to London for Soviet propaganda. Five thousand golden sovereigns at a time to bolster up Bolshevik teachings. Five thousand pounds at a time, for a handful of well-intentioned communist Britishers to be inoculated with the virus that has brought about such sights as can be seen in every back street of Moscow or Leningrad. Russia accepts our money to feed her children—and we accept her stolen money to educate our mis-informed but good intentioned communists.

God help these people—what, what on earth is to be the end ? . . .

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That an end must come to such sights and scenes of misery, and poverty that defies description—they are unbelievable—in that land of terror, is certain. The terror cannot go on. It is far worse than the French Revolution. Will success crown its efforts by breaking the spirit of the people that a few may rule, or will the old religion of the people stir once more in their breasts and break the government? The whole Bolshevik party in Russia, let us remember, has but 800,000 registered members, and Soviet Russia contains about 150 million nowadays of whom about two per cent. are Communists.

One wonders. One deplotes. Surely one has suffered a bad dream; a long-drawn nightmare.

Russia is Hell. Starving and terror-stricken. It has little money and no prospects. It is a veritable grave of hopes.

CHAPTER II

RUSSIA IN RAGS

The best hotel—A spy hole—The perils of my tea-tray, and the anxiety of the waiter—A cup of tea costs 7s. 6d.—£4 to £5 a day the cheapest one could pay—The Soviet Jew—Ballerina, aged 62—Joys of museums—Good theatres—Ill-mannered audiences—A theatrical insult to religion—The death of Rasputin the Monk—A vile play—Good work of Quakers and Mennonites—Soviets ignore facts—Republic generally corrupt—Religion is the opium of the people—Famine always knocking at the door—Music and Art starved: neither pianos nor paints—Awful expense of everything.

I WAS horrified. In Moscow I rubbed my eyes again and again to know if I was dreaming or awake and alive.

The small handful of men, many of them clever, who brought all this desolation about, tried an experiment. They failed. Would it not be more honourable to allow their failure, instead of bolstering up their own insecure position at home; to own their over-enthusiastic mistakes instead of trying to drag other lands into the same miserable plight? One by one men have owned failure. They have at once been arrested, and sent away "for their health." They seldom return.

It may be difficult to live up to the ethics of decent life, but it is worth trying.

I often recall the discomforts of that expensive and bad "best" hotel—really a spy hole—in Moscow, and the horror of the servant at my daring to leave the tea-tray outside my bedroom door on the first floor and within twenty yards of the lift. He knew his Russia. He knew that at the "best" government (Savoy) hotel the tin cans and pots would be promptly stolen, to say nothing of the sugar, just as I knew (from having been told) that my shoes would disappear if put outside to be cleaned. But the waiter's way of explaining the danger of the silvered cans being stolen was to demonstrate the act by putting them all in his pocket.

Yet the leaders who have brought about this dishonesty (largely due to starvation) are daring to try to break up

the British Empire, and are planning to tackle the United States also.

Should Bolshevism ever take fair hold of the latter, and the "darkies" and the German and Polish Jews join forces, the so-called "Americans" will be obliterated.

Two joys remain from better days, the Museums and the Theatres.

The theatres are particularly interesting: they always have been in Russia; and they are still often excellent, always original and void of traditional rendering. Their productions all seem to consist more or less, and generally more, of propaganda that openly works for *World Revolution*. These two words are constantly on everyone's lips. They haunt me.

Having just seen amazingly immoral plays in Berlin extravagantly staged, and old classical dramas in Warsaw superbly represented and strangely lighted, it was particularly interesting to spend several evenings in the theatres of Moscow.

A novel theatrical idea to strike one was a screen of panelled wood set about twelve feet back, standing right across the stage, which had no curtain. This was a moving panelled wall and turned round in sections, so that everything arrived in front on a sort of revolving stage, and all the scenes were shown in a contracted space in the middle of the panel. Furniture that could not arrive with the revolve came in on strings from the sides and placed itself at the allotted spot—not for comedy's sake, because most of the plays are tragic. To mention another innovation, apparently no modern play is complete without two or three staircases and a number of long, full, plain curtains. But the effects in general are good, if unreal, while the curtailment of the stage is excellent. In fact both that and the lighting of the scenes in all three towns might be copied with the greatest advantage in England. By this plan a large unwieldy space, such as meets one at Covent Garden or Drury Lane, is covered in until only the inner middle portion is left for the scene. Thus peasants' huts and other small interiors are contracted to their proper proportions.

It so chanced that the last Russian ballet was given on a Sunday. All the shops were shut, not because it was Sunday, but because it was the chief holiday of the week.

Masses of people crushed and pushed into the trams—one class only and filled to suffocation. Many of the richest wore no hats. There are no rich in Russia. The people have no money.

The performance was given at the famous old big State Theatre and comprised three ballets, with the original scenery and dresses and the original Ballerina, a lady of sixty-two. All excellent.

Never, never have I seen such ill-mannered audiences. They push and shove, and talk and walk about, and eat things; and young men and women hang round one another's necks. Kisses are quite popular. In fact, at one of the theatres a youth laid his head on a girl's lap and she bent her head to his, and tickled him, while they talked in this unceremonious but very public position during the entire act, to the annoyance of many but the suppression by none. Manners, good clothes, culture or refinement, even common decency, seem to have disappeared in this land of freedom. They have killed the goose with the golden egg, and bred a new goose laying hollow eggs, the shells of which are glued together with lies and misrepresentations.

An interesting little play represented a queer-looking table placed in the middle of the stage. It faced the audience. A devout old woman in the drama was very much perturbed at what had happened to her son. After everyone had left the scene she anxiously peered round, cautiously locked the doors, and drew the curtains closely about the windows. Having made sure that she was alone, she stood with her back to the audience in front of this altar-like table and devoutly crossed herself. She then drew a stool from beneath the tablecloth and lifted out two candles which she placed on the little table. These she lighted. Looking anxiously round the room, re-examining the door and window, she then fetched from a cupboard a small crucifix and reverently placed it between the two lighted candles; and then, kneeling on the little stool, facing her improvised altar, her back to the audience and facing the little crucifix, she crossed herself again, bowed her head, and devoutly prayed aloud.

The murmurs that had been accentuating among the onlookers now burst forth into uproarious hisses, and cries and groans. The scene had evidently been engineered to lead up to this public demonstration against religion.

Banging at the doors from behind, the family rushed back into the stage-room, tore down the crucifix, thumped down a gramophone in its place, which turned on jazz music ; and amid uproarious laughter and hissing from the audience the curtain descended.

Another play I saw was absolutely modern, and centred round the death of Rasputin the Monk. It has only been written two or three years and is a great favourite in Russia to-day ; for it depicts the Tsar as a more or less drivelling idiot playing with his snapshots and photograph albums while at the Headquarters of his army during the War. To make this play even more real, the generals were got up to imitate the actual generals of that day and wore their identical uniforms. More than that, as the playbills announced in large type, the actress who represented the Empress wore the Empress's own dresses, hats and sabres taken straight from the Palace itself.

It was a vile play, representing everyone in the vilest possible light ; but it was well acted and extremely well produced. More particularly the scene of the murder of Rasputin on the Neva, the stage setting of which was quite admirable. It gave the room above, to which the monk was lured to meet a woman and where the struggle took place, the boat-house below, and the staircase leading from one to the other. One almost saw the car waiting to drive the body off to the Neva to be pushed under the ice. Rasputin ruined Russia.

In fact, the one and only thing in Russia that struck me as good as, one might almost say better than, before the Revolution, was the setting of stage plays ; and that was greatly marred by the familiar and noisy behaviour all through the performance of the audience. When the curtain fell everyone rushed madly for the door. It became a veritable scrum : one was jostled by the crowd and thumped by the crowd until bruises seemed a part of the evening's entertainment, to say nothing of torn garments. Children begged outside the theatre doors for food, long into the night—yes, little homeless, hungry children, many of them criminals.

From such scenes one passed out into the night and walked home, honestly preferring to walk than to take one of the over-small droshkys and the over-worn horse that dragged it. The harness was shabby, while the *visozshik* either wore fewer pleats in his petticoats than

he did on my two former visits, or he had lost flesh, for he no longer appeared to be of his wondrous proportions. Added to that, the road surfaces have never been repaired for years and are full of holes left by the Revolution; only the chief streets have been mended, and they are required for demonstration to show foreigners the capacity and wealth of the city.

So often in great political crises the pendulum swings violently at first. That things must change and change soon was borne in on me every hour in Russia. Change and complete change must come, or Russia and the Russian people will cease to exist. From Tsarism to Revolution has bred a worse tyranny—far, far worse.

Against Soviets as Soviets one has nothing to say. Against the result of their rule in Russia and interference elsewhere one cannot protest too strongly. They are the world's terror to-day.

They have locked the door of Russia. None can enter from outside, but they themselves are free to roam the world, and plant the seeds of discontent and revolution and civil war in every soil.

They put up a wireless for show—and propaganda—and below it shiver the starving thousands, including little children with old, wizened faces.

No pen could describe the irony, the cruelty, the tragedy of modern Russia as I saw it with my own two eyes. Politics I spoke to no one—politics are not my line. Humanity and results, form and colour, habits and customs, are what I care for.

And I had no intention of writing anything about Russia when I went there—I was on my way back to China, to both paint and write in China. But Russia so moved me, and so amazed me, that write I had to. Circumstances forced me. And week by week the veil dropped from my eyes, and I saw China was Russia, or rather Russia was China. The two could not be divided.

Truth, honesty, wisdom, strength, and honour have built up the British Empire. Let us depart not one jot from those five virtues, which bring us the world's respect—and envy—to-day.

We Britons at home are trying to strangle the greatest world force, the greatest civilization, the most prodigious thing in the universe to-day.

Some are allowing the religion of dollars, or the cult of cruelty and suppression, to undermine them.

The Republics of the Americas, China, France and Russia can teach us little. It is we who can teach them the laws of just government. Do not let us slip back from our pedestal. For centuries the British nation has led the world. We must lead it still.

Republics are always more or less corrupt. They cannot help it. Constant change means constant upheaval and the top man putting all his own friends into office to support him,* until another top man comes along and kicks him and all his minions out—and the same begins again, to last for another four years. The first year the President is learning his job, the second and third year he becomes useful, and the fourth he is sterile, afraid to offend anyone or do anything while he nurses his seat, hoping to get in again. The greatest achievements have been attained under monarchs.

Let us take warning and cease quarrelling among ourselves, or we may arrive at the condition of Russia, or of China, where anyone's head may be chopped off without warning or trial. That is what "government by minority," which our communists aim at, means. Only Education can rule, and to-day the difficulty everywhere is to find sufficiently educated men to wield the sceptre with justice.

As England has not, like Italy in her critical hour, produced a strong leader for years, the country must support all that is best and wisest as a whole—and remember each individual person helps or hinders the march of his or her own country. Every individual action counts.

I cannot and will not believe that our splendid British race, which has sown its seed over the world, can fail at the root. The workman and his wife may become intoxicated with Red rot because they have not yet discovered it is a tissue of lies from beginning to end. It may have started with ideals—it probably did—but the Soviets have dragged the ideals through mud and blood. If only other countries could see the sights I saw walking out alone in the streets of Moscow, they would have nightmares and be haunted too. One in every

*The United States public servants have increased 60 per cent. in twelve years.

four or five persons out of two millions in Moscow was in rags, starving, homeless, with terror in his eyes—a beggar.

China in bulk may be poor. Russia in bulk is in tatters. And that in spite of far too generous help from outside.

After the allotment of houses and universal foot-spacing mentioned in the first chapter, those two benevolent institutions, the Society of Friends and the Mennonites (Christian farmers), had nearly completed their charity work and were fewer in number, so they were told to clear out, their house being wanted by the Government for the Greek Legation. But, like many other such excellent institutions both British and American, they did not altogether close down, because it was known before June, 1925, that famine was probable that summer in Southern Russia.

Famine is always knocking at Russia's door; but she does not keep her grain for that. She sells it, even if she defaults in delivery, and allows outside and over-generous countries to come in and help the famine sufferers at their own expense. Of course the officials "regret they were misinformed, and the crops were not as big as were expected." But it is their duty to be properly informed and not disseminate their misinformation to the world in the propaganda she sends out weekly everywhere through a Soviet agricultural organization in Rome. I saw it in Canada, and it certainly claims things which seem, to a mere passer-by, utterly incapable of attainment.*

Among the varied experiences of this Moscow visit it really was a joy to get a peep at the old Russia, now so rapidly passing away. This was afforded by a small crowd of peasants clustered thickly about the door of a tiny shrine. The latter was the Ivernian Chapel, situated at a gate of the city leading to the Red Square. On the left of it is a large building upon whose walls, in letters about eight or nine inches high, still remained the famous words put up after the Revolution :

"RELIGION IS THE OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE."

Within twenty feet of this pronouncement stood the aforesaid tiny chapel, not much larger than a bathing machine, crammed with religious fervour. Those who

*And in February, 1929, there were still long queues waiting for bread in Russia, and every form of food, clothing and machinery was lacking. Things were getting worse and worse.

could not get in, knelt and prayed on the steps outside. A moving scene. A priest of the Greek Church, with his long hair (for, like Christ's, it is never cut) and high black hat, was chanting. The people were praying fervently; they were kissing the famous old ikons from which the silver and pearls and jewels had been stripped—candles flickered and dozens of little lamps were burning. Poor, very poor though these people were, the flame of religion remained, and they saved their tiny kopecks for incense or candles, and worshipped with all their hearts and souls before the altar of their church. Public worship had been publicly forbidden; but the Government had found it wiser to wink at what it could not stifle.

On the one hand, this chapel aflame with religious worship—worship of the God of two thousand years—and but twenty yards away, through the Gate in the Great Wall, Lenin, the modern god of a few short years, lying under glass in his tomb, just outside the old Royal Kremlin Palace, guarded by soldiers in uniform. Where else could one find so startling a juxtaposition?

In addition to the inscription that "Religion is the Opium of the People," one found lots of names on the city walls, painted in big red words of seven or ten inch letters, sometimes in Russian characters, but more often in Latin letters—not in what would pass for order—but drawn anyhow. They are the names of those who the modern Russian considers have helped on World Revolution, and among them is that of the composer Chopin. This upcropping of a great musical name reminds one how for the last hundred years Russia has produced composers, novelists and artists, many of whom have reached world-wide fame. What will be its production in the next hundred years? No one can guess.

I heard music—wonderful music—I listened—yes; it was wonderful. Paderewski, perhaps, on a pianola; but no, that was no pianola, that was the touch of the human hand. I slipped out of my room, attracted by the masterful playing. It was a Russian boy of seventeen or eighteen. He was poorly dressed like everyone else; but he had the hands of refinement, the face of generations of breeding.

"What would Madame like?" It was all the same to

him—Wagner, Rachmaninoff, Debussy, Bach. The boy was a genius. Was he studying anywhere? No, he had no money to study.

Did the Soviets not pay? No—he was a boot-mender.

And again. I met a dear old artist, once a very famous artist. He looked terribly shabby, with frayed shirt and spotted old Harris tweed Norfolk jacket.

Was he painting much?

“No—I can’t paint. I have no paints.”

“Don’t the Soviets give you any paints?”

“No, I have no money to buy them. So I don’t paint any more.”

Here to my knowledge were two real artists going to waste.

The Royal House of Russia enriched the nation not only with pictures, furniture, carvings, lacquer, but treasures of embroidery, many of the latter actually stitched by the Royal ladies and their handmaidens. The best embroideries of this kind in Moscow are of the sixteenth century, and well looked after by loving hands. These men and women who are running and rearranging Museums come from the intellectual class, often from the noble class. They are people who have understood and loved their own treasures. They are now penniless, homeless and working for the Soviets at a hundred roubles a month, that is approximately £10, or 50 American dollars, and that is the return for the expenses of a University education. Ten pounds a month on which to support themselves and their wives and families. They are paid about the same as the workmen; often less, because they are not given the privileges the workmen get. Life is *very* expensive in Russia to-day, probably twice as expensive as in England, and so these educated brainful people are wearing the shabbiest of clothes, and are hungry. Still they are privileged to be alive, and not among those thousands who were shot for merely the sin of being well-born or educated; and workmen’s wages are half what they are in England.

CHAPTER III

RUSSIA'S NEW GOD

Moscow the capital—No Embassies, but substitutes called "Missions"—Hidden loud-speaker—Mystery of the Kremlin and the conference held within its walls—The difficulty of seeing a Cabinet Minister—How he was guarded—Two witnesses present to guard him—No eye saw inside the Kremlin while the secret session sat—Secret session to ruin China—Suicides common—Lenin in a glass case—Lenin surrounded by soldiers and blazing in artificial light—Lenin, the new god of Russia, on red satin cushions—One thousand five hundred people in one pilgrimage—Outsiders pay for their tickets to see him.

FORMERLY the Embassies were in St. Petersburg, then the capital of Russia. After the Revolution the capital was moved to Moscow, but the Embassies ceased to exist. They refused to recognize the Soviet Republic (a Minority Government by no means representative of the people), and settled themselves unostentatiously in Moscow, but not even as "Legations." They represented their countries, they called themselves "Missions." Ours was called British Mission.

Now it so happened that one of the foreign Missions moved into a better home, the home that had previously been occupied by another important foreign minister, and when certain alterations in the electric light in the Minister's private study were being made, something strange was found under one layer of thin paper in the wall. The workmen did not know what it was. The foreman was called; an expert was fetched. And—what think you that strange thing veiled by a sheet of thin paper in the wall of that foreign representative's house was?

It was a loud speaker.

Every word that foreign gentleman had said, every interview he had had, every letter he had dictated, had been listened to by someone in the Soviet pay at the other end. That little story was told me after I left Moscow, but I have no doubt it was perfectly true, knowing the source from which it came.

Beware.

It always seems so extraordinarily easy in life to destroy. Children destroy. Revolutions have come—they have

upheaved and destroyed, and, alas, generally tend towards dishonesty in politics, although sometimes they have been successful.

My chief reason for stopping in Russia on my way to Manchuria was to see the Kremlin and its art treasures. Although I knew the Museums of St. Petersburg well, I had never seen the Kremlin. It is stuffed full of some of the finest art treasures in the world, the careful accumulation of great connoisseurs for hundreds of years, and the Kremlin was my Mecca in Russia. Now it is difficult to see anything in Russia to-day except the sort of specially prepared things that are duly shown off to Labour parties or Socialist Members of Parliament, so I had got an introduction from my old friend, Sir Martin, Conway to the head of Education, one of the really enlightened men in Russia to-day, asking that I might see the treasures.

No one will believe the red tape of Bolshevism. One passed from one official to another, from one room to another, from one secretary to another, and if the secretary does not fancy you, or thinks you too smartly dressed, you never penetrate beyond that secretary, however important your mission may be.

I went. I saw. But I did not conquer. The female secretary admitted me not.

Crowds of rough, ill-mannered men and women with black shirts and bits of red were waiting amid magnificent old Louis XV. furniture, for the house had once been a private mansion, and the present Government requires double and treble the administrative offices of the late régime. I waited an hour, and drew a blank; but I refused to give up my letter of introduction, and merely pinned my card to the envelope, with a line to say whom it was from and that I had the letter in my possession. "Call again" was all I could achieve that day. I called.

"No, she had not been able to do anything," she discourteously announced. The Minister was busy.

Some nice man sitting among fifty waiting people, who spoke some English, came to the rescue. Finally he got hold of that envelope hidden by then in a drawer, and insisted on its going in to the great man. It did.

"Would I call the next day?" was the message quickly sent back.

I did, and that, the third time, I saw the famous Lunacharsky. He was courtesy itself. Spoke in excellent

French. Had lived long in Paris, and was charming. A female stenographer sat at one side of the magnificent and finely carpeted room, a male sculptor was reproducing his head at another. So there were two witnesses present to guard him.

Yes, the sculptor was busy. There seems to be plenty of money in Russia for sculpturing Soviet rulers' busts and printing their faces on post-cards. I never saw anything like the number of busts of Lenin. They are big and small and medium sized. They are well done and badly done. They are sold in every shop and at every corner. Lenin. Lenin. Lenin. Even the Government all-sorts-store at Chita had a dozen Lenins for sale on a shelf.

For a "friend of Sir Conway" Mr. Lunacharsky would do anything, etc.—and finally he walked to the telephone and had a long conversation with the head of the Kremlin himself.

"Nothing can be done till Monday, Madame. There is a very important secret conference going on," he told me in his excellent French on putting down the receiver.

"But is it all over the Kremlin?" I gently asked, knowing its enormous size.

"Well—yes and no. There are a great number of people and secretaries at this conference, and no one can possibly be admitted, but I quite hope on Monday, Madame, that it will be arranged."

"Monsieur, this is my third visit to your office, and it always takes an hour, and only this time have I seen you," I persisted. He scowled, so I said no more. Someone had bungled, that rude secretary outside, perchance.

We parted excellent friends. I felt he was a strong man and enlightened, but even he did not get me into the Kremlin. No—in spite of all the help given by this really clever Minister of Education and famous playwright, Lunacharsky, one never got into the Kremlin. Those "Secret Conferences," very Secret Conferences, were going on through the last three weeks of that May month of 1925. At that time I was ignorant of the importance of these Secret Sessions—of which more anon—but I often pondered and remembered later how one of their own Chief Ministers had said: "They cannot last much longer, and I hope you can see the Kremlin on Monday."

And I had called again on that Monday morning.

"No—I am very sorry the session is not over yet," he

said, "but perhaps by Thursday—I have not forgotten, Madame, and will do my best." He was cordiality and kindness itself.

I called yet again. His secretary, who had learnt to be more polite after seeing her superior's cordiality, regretted, etc. "Next week perhaps."

And so one saw how utterly impotent one of the chief Ministers, and the head of the Kremlin himself, can be in Russia to-day if the few political Soviet leaders are buried in world-reaching Secret Conference. What could it all be about?

But by next week I had gone. I never saw the inside of the Kremlin. And on my train came, unknown to me, a man *en route* to China—fresh with his orders from that very Secret Session. That Siberian journey became more and more interesting day by day, as a veritable jig-saw puzzle unfolded itself. The secret session and the Rasputin play were about to unfold themselves.

We all have some sort of impression of the Russia of to-day, coloured doubtless by individual bias, of that amazing, inchoate country-in-the-melting-pot.

My own first impression of Russia, gathered in 1896, was that of a happy peaceful country. A land inhabited by a great and powerful aristocracy at whose back swarmed a cheery horde of red-shirted moujiks: red-haired, black-hatted—illiterate, docile, religious, kindly. The Nevski Prospect was alive with well-to-do, happily conditioned, prosperous people. In winter snow it was thronged with fast-gliding sleighs; each with its three spanking horses, two galloping and the middle one trotting. On the box would be a nice fat old *isvozshik*, with dozens and dozens of pleats in his thick fat petticoats. The whole length of the Nevski hummed and sparkled with life and movement.

On my second visit to Russia, in 1912, the moujik still wore his red shirt and high black boots; and still only a small percentage of his class were literate. He was intensely religious. He loved and revered his priests, holding their families in high esteem. For the practice of the Greek Church, unlike that of the celibate Roman, obliges a man to marry before he becomes a priest—a much healthier state of things. Only in the monasteries the priests of Russia were unmarried. One of the great monasteries I then visited on Lake Ladoga is now a prison.

The whole country was a prosperous, going concern in those days—as far as one could see on the surface. There were splendid hotels, with excellent cooking; especially good were the sturgeon and the caviare. Russian cooking in fact was probably the best in the world at that time. There were wonderful shops, and some of the most interesting displayed the peasants' work. No country exceeded in charm the buttons, buckles, combs and embroidery of Russia at that time; they showed originality of design and cleverness of workmanship. Yet when one bought anything the bill was totalled up on frames containing coloured balls on wires, which were moved mysteriously by deft fingers to arrive at the total cost, just as they are universally in China to-day. They were the sort of toy things children play with, rather different from the mechanical totalizer that has since been invented and is in use all over the world to-day.

Tsardom may have been a tyranny, but it was a beneficent tyranny; there was culture, there were rich people, there were happy people. Sovietism is a tyranny that is not beneficent, but cruel and hard. There is no culture, there are few rich people and no happy ones. An illiterate man can never rule a literate man: all he can do is to exterminate him.

No, the Tsardom in Russia during the reign of the Dynasty Romanoff (1613-1917) was not a real tyranny, and capital punishment was rare, not more common than in any other country; and now Russia is ruled by a most cruel tyranny, and there is absolutely no freedom at all, nor is anyone's head safe. And again I had not any idea of writing about Russia on this third visit. I wanted to see the Kremlin and I wanted to cross Siberia to China; but what I saw was so amazing that on reaching China I felt it would be wrong to withhold my knowledge, sad though it be.

Russia to-day is the most poverty-stricken, miserable, uncivilized country in the world. Suicide is common. Terror is on every face, and the result of hunger palpable. Our poorest Britisher is far richer and has far, far more freedom than his so-called "comrade" in Russia.

Yet Soviet Russia is out to break the British Empire. He is amazed that the demolition has not been accomplished more easily, and as he has failed in Europe with England and Germany he is now hard at work in

Afghanistan and India, in Mongolia and in China, with his eyes already turning from China to the United States.

Yes, I met several interesting people in modern Russia.

The first was on the train from Warsaw, where he was Russian Minister, M. Voiyekoff, a man with a splendid brain, who speaks perfect Parisian French, and who lived a long time in France. He was met in Moscow by a crowd of people who gave him a perfect ovation. Did he come to Moscow for the Secret Conference at the Kremlin? I know not. Long, long afterwards rumour said this pleasant congenial companion had been one of the men who had signed the Tsar's death-warrant.*

Russia has made herself a new God. In that land of godlessness Lenin is being made into a saint, a veritable Russian god. And what kind of man was Lenin?

The psychology of Lenin has been a puzzle to many. Professor Sarolea, in his great book, "Impressions of Soviet Russia," in summing Lenin up as "an incomparable demagogue," ingeniously accounts for this.

"The demagogue," he says, "has no opinions or emotions outside those of the crowd. He cannot assert his personality: he is not leading, but led. If he outsteps his party he is not followed. If he stops he is left behind. If he resists the crowd marches over his prostrate body. He is the political actor who, eternally playing one part, is at last merged into it, to the extinction of whatever personality he may have once possessed.

"Lenin lived in an atmosphere of brute force, assisted by madmen and criminals. He had neither scruple nor conscience. Like Nietzsche's superman, he lived 'beyond good and evil.' He marched to his end wading through a sea of blood. He was a man of inflexible and stern courage, with the psychology of a Jacobin."

Lenin was embalmed with much trouble after his death, and was laid in state under a glass case in a temporary wooden Mausoleum in the great square running along one side of the Kremlin. There day and night stand soldiers. Now, where all men are equals and all men are comrades, and no pomp and wealth are permissible, how comes it that one man should have a Mausoleum, or lie in state like a Royal King, or be guarded day and night by soldiers? Why soldiers? If all men are alike and all men are comrades, surely they can guard one another without a uniform or a bayonet?

*He was murdered in the station at Warsaw, where I had stood talking to him on the same platform two years before.

Russia is all holidays. Sunday is the great holiday and museums are open, and on Monday all museums are closed. Thursday, 28th of May, happened to be Russian Ascension Day, another great holiday by tradition, so there were five holidays in ten days. On Wednesday Lenin cannot be seen (an extra arrangement for cleaning purposes), and by ill luck we went on a Wednesday to the Mausoleum, only to be turned away. Four languages helped little, but we finally learnt that the tomb would be open on Monday, open at eight p.m., and that it was necessary to buy a ticket. Determined not to miss the worshipful figure that modern Russia has made its Buddha, Mohammed, or Christ, we went again to the square at seven-thirty p.m. that evening.

Already fifteen hundred or more people were lined up. It was one of the many "organized excursions" from Leningrad, and everywhere else, brought to the spot. They were four abreast and passed right across the great square and away along a side street. It was mostly made up of children from schools and youths from factories.

Many in that enormous line of humanity wore red handkerchiefs round their heads and the male portion their red revolutionary ties. It really looked as if we should be baulked again with such a procession ahead of us. That long line appeared perfectly hopeless. While my friend went off to buy the tickets I boldly marched up to the entrance of this temporary brown wooden structure and in my best German asked if there was any chance at all of getting in that night, since we were travelling to China and we had already tried several times.

A nice woman speaking faulty German was moved to compassion, and she explained that this was one of the excursions from the North; that they had been all night in the train; had seen sights all day, were now fit to drop, and had still to stand for another hour probably, and then travel back for twelve hours all through the night. Still, she added, they must, of course, see the Saviour of their country. "And we have our tickets," she concluded.

"My friend has gone to buy them," I rejoined.

"But ours are special tickets. We go first."

"This was our repeated attempt," I appealed again, "and must be our last, as we were leaving for China."

More soldiers were arriving on duty. By this time there must have been a couple of dozen, when my friend

returned to say no more tickets could be issued for that night.

The nice Russian woman, I presume, explained this to a soldier, who in turn explained to some official ; as they were talking the small gate opened and the fifteen hundred procession began to move. The nice woman gripped my dress, I gripped my friend's dress, and in a moment we were borne along with the seething mass.

It was all very orderly and quiet. There was a silence now as of people going on a great pilgrimage. We passed along semi-lighted narrow passages ; we went down stairs, and round more angles ; and then in a blaze of dramatic light below us we saw the modern god of modern Russia in all his Soviet glory.

Large electric lights were cleverly arranged to throw out the glass-cased figure from the surrounding gloom. Apparently it was a wax figure, strangely reminiscent of Madame Tussaud's, with a huge head and rather red hair. The eyes were closed, and the modern black coat was covered to the waist by a rug so that little of the hands were visible ; and the bandy legs of the little man, so noticeable in his sculptured monuments, were entirely hidden.

The head lay on a splendid scarlet satin cushion, and although the whole thing was highly spectacular it was not gruesome, because the face was not like a real face at all.

Soldiers stood at all angles at attention as the crowd, still three or four abreast, slowly moved round the railed platform above the figure. One entered on Lenin's right, about level with his shoulder, walked round his feet and passed out on his left. Again along dramatically half-lighted passages and into the night beyond.

And what were one's feelings ?

Well, to be honest, I hardly know.

I think I have seen nearly all the great Buddhas of the world, from the lovely-faced bronze statue at Kamakura, near Yokohama, a few weeks after the earthquake, to the peaceful White Jade Buddha at Peking. From the often gruesome Buddhas of India to the largest in the world at Rangoon (a hundred and eighty-one feet long), and the collection at Boro Budur in Java, but never, never had I seen a god like this before in all its modernity of everyday clothes and satin pillow and glass exhibition case. But this figure represents the new religion of Russia to-day.

Russia has destroyed her old religion as far as possible, she has torn up the religion of the older people, and now she bids the younger generation welcome at the shrine of Lenin—their Saviour—and worship him as their God.

Fourteen months before (April, 1924) I had entered with the first seventy the tomb of Tut-ank-Amen in the Valley of the Kings at Luxor. Had seen that beautiful boy face—of three thousand years ago—with its majesty and dignity and the glorious golden workmanship and craftsman's art in every form wrought by a great people. Splendid, regal Tut-ankh-Amen in quiet simplicity and dignified magnificence lying in his sarcophagus.

Here in Moscow lay a plebeian, bandy-legged little man with twenty-four soldiers with bowed heads to guard him in his glass show-case.

This is Russia's God.

FOOTNOTE—MARCH, 1929.

And what has this god Lenin given Russia? At the present moment there is an iron famine, a fuel famine, and a food famine stalking through the land.

This god has given Russia years of weariness and depression. Public misery is the result. How can one be happy without sufficient means to feed and clothe one's family?

There is also a lack of raw materials in the industrial areas, and this limits the earning capacity of the workmen, which, at its best, has been assessed at 52 per cent., compared with the 100 per cent. earnings of the British worker.

What a god to have.

CHAPTER IV

ACROSS SIBERIA

Only a fool would have gone—Troubles in Moscow station—Imposition of taxes on suit cases—"Beds" made with a rug only for 13 days—Extra charge for a sheet—A strange gentleman, said he spoke no English, a lie—A golden-haired, fluffy female, who turned out to be Rasputin's daughter—Mr. Daddy-long-legs, the intriguer—America and Russia's stupid substitution for first, second and third-class—Literally four classes—Difficulties of crossing Asia—Siberia still synonymous with convicts—A hideous journey—A miners' camp—Hundreds of miles of desolation—Pretty flowers—The town where the Tsar and all his family was killed—The third night out from Moscow—Bang: thump: blackness—A railway accident—Shrieks—Impossible to find clothes in darkness—A terrible sight!—Dead and dying—Mail bags scattered—Old International Sleeping Car the only thing which withstood the accident—Cook killed in restaurant—Postman killed on top of mail-bags—No engine to the rescue—No bandages—No help—My sheet covers the dead and is then charged for—A dog in the debris—A Kodak snap followed by arrest—No free speech—No free Press—No free education—Four days and nights almost without food—No water or light—Two candles for the entire car.

NONE but a fool would have gone to the expense of crossing a large part of the world's surface with a hovering revolution at the other end.

London, Paris, Berlin, New York, all knew—the wires of the world had flashed the trouble in Shanghai of May 30th, 1925, so soon to be exaggerated into world importance. Leading articles had been written, Embassies were busy—but in Moscow only the few Soviet rulers knew. It is not good for Russia ever to know anything. She is blindfolded and muzzled by her leaders. And so in all good faith a sleeping-car load of different nationalities—the only people who could afford the price—started unknowingly for China.

As a specimen of news distribution, *en passant*, Amundsen was lost at that time. I was sorry, and asked a Soviet :

"Have you heard if Amundsen has been found?"

"No."

"Is there nothing in your paper?"

"We don't put those sort of things in our paper. We put Russian news," he replied glibly.

"But that is world news."

"We don't want world news."

"But valiant deeds like that inspire ambition, and make character and adventure and enterprise."

"That does not interest Russians."

Arrived at the Moscow station, our troubles began. There were luggage complications, and we had a pretty example of Russian chicanery; for they promptly laid an extra tax of twenty-eight roubles upon a cabin-box, to cover the whole transportation of which across Siberia I had already paid in full. Another fourteen, and eighteen, roubles respectively were demanded for taking suit-cases and hat-boxes into the compartment at all. One almost expected to be re-charged for daring to occupy the *coupé* itself for which Miss Lachel Humphreys and I had already paid. In regard to these little "extras," which amounted to some pounds in money, it was calmly printed that the imposition, otherwise called taxes, was

"FOR THE CHILDREN OF SOVIET RUSSIA, WHO WILL BE THE RULERS OF THE FUTURE."

After a terrible amount of talking and imposition of taxes for venturing to have any hand-luggage at all, and awful struggles with the porters, we started. So, knowing absolutely nothing of the troubles ahead in China, we stepped into the old International Sleeping Car confiscated by the Soviets and now run by them on the one trans-continental train that crosses each way per week. Thus we left Moscow on that 3rd of June, 1925, and embarked unwittingly upon a further adventurous journey. The day of our start will never be forgotten in Shanghai or Peking; but of that more anon. At that time my friend and I knew nothing.

One felt that dinner could not be far distant; and after tiring days, and little sleep amid Moscow's tragic life, it seemed almost pleasant to look forward to eleven or twelve quiet days in a peaceful sleeping-car across Siberia to China.

But the beds must be made while we dined, and then the much-needed repose would follow. There were two attendants. Neither spoke a word of anything but Russian. "Russia for the Russians" is one of the slogans, but there were only two Russians aboard the Sleeper. So the other eighteen from various countries

had to manage as best they could. Hardly international courtesy, as practically no one speaks Russian, and English is the world-wide language of travel and commerce. Even in China and Japan every station sign and every menu is written in English as well as in the vernacular.

Seeing a shabbily dressed man who looked educated, and still was Russian, in the corridor, I ventured to address him and ask if he spoke English.

"No." (This proved to be a lie later.)

"Sprechen Sie Deutsch?" I queried.

"Ja, ein bischen." Yet it was not "ein bischen," but a great deal, he spoke.

"Would you be so very kind as to ask those attendants to make our beds while we dine?"

"Certainly," he replied. And calling the attendant he issued the command as a General might to an orderly.

I was interested. Who was this man?

All went well that night; the meal was good, the beds were made in our absence. Sheets, called "Wash," had to be paid for extra, about two shillings a night, and even blankets cost money. But still, rough and tumble and dirty as it was, it was possible, except that the basin was bottomless; that there was no water of any kind or towel or tooth-tumbler or water-bottle.

There is nothing much to vary the monotony of thousands of miles of uninteresting, dull, dreary travel, and any little incidents amuse one.

At a wayside station—they are all wayside stations—we got out, and rambled towards the engine. A small crowd of men had collected near the engine and a shrill woman's voice was addressing them.

Good Heavens! The shabby, golden-fluffy female travelling with the German speaker was haranguing the mob. And apparently, judging by the score of eager people listening to her words and forceful demonstrations, upon a subject of importance. She was melodramatic.

Who could she be? What was it all about?

The next scrap to unfold in this chapter of adventure displayed a tall, thin man about six-foot-two high, apparently a third-class passenger, who constantly came to our sleeper with letters and papers and boldly went into the compartment of Mr. S. Then he took to hanging about our corridor and talking to the golden-haired lady, until I felt inclined to remark that our space was extremely

limited, and that if he had not a sleeping-car ticket he had better go back to his own compartment. But I could not say it if I would—I was tongue-tied.

Mr. Long-legs, who was dressed exactly like a coalheaver at his work, entered our coach again with a man. They passed me in the passage and went without knocking into the compartment of Mr. S. Who on earth is that long-legs, I pondered, and what right has he to travel first class on a third-class ticket—and who was the other ruffian he had brought in with him? One seemed to feel the whole train belonged to this mysterious trio. We left the station, but the new man did not leave the compartment. He travelled on for an hour or so and then slipped out when the train pulled up at some village.

Really the fine-looking Russian of dramatic air, the poorly-clad little golden-fluffy, whose voice and gesticulations were worthy of an anarchist agitator, and the long-legged coalheaver were an ill-assorted looking group, but they seemed a mighty harmonious triangle. And again and again the lady collected little groups at the halts on the line to address, and again and again men entered that compartment of Mr. S. for an hour or so and slipped off at some other station.

Were we travelling with comedy or tragedy. Was this intrigue and propaganda. Who were they. What did they?

Well, admitting that Siberia was a formidable proposition, without towels or creature comforts from the start, one always consoled oneself with the prospect of China revisited—that China which had cast such a spell eighteen months before, that one had travelled round the world again to spend another year amid her alluring mysteries.

Peaceful now, of course, after the Civil War I saw begin. Peaceful now for several months, ready for progress in her own quiet, plodding way. That was the China to which one looked forward so keenly, as the train slowly steamed across those desolate wastes.

Not a sketch could be made, not one photograph could be taken, not one note or letter could be written, no map could be consulted, because this was Russia, and Russia forbade such things—well-nigh on pain of death.

Anyway my determination had succeeded, and in spite of passport difficulties and tickets and scandalous luggage

and other ridiculous taxes, in spite of strange money and no knowledge of the language, we two Englishwomen were in Siberia in a coach with two Russians, four Germans, seven Japanese, one Chinese and two others who were Poles. Eighteen in all.

The Russians, like the Americans, have a myth of "no class distinction."

ALL ONE CLASS IS THE SLOGAN.

In Russia the one class does away, as in America, with the words, *first*, *second* and *third*, and these are the respective names:

AMERICAN STYLE.

RUSSIAN STYLE.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Pullman and Observation Car. | 1. Sleeping car (extra expensive). Two in a compartment—an allotted berth with an extra tax for the children's fund. |
| 2. Standard Car. | 2. "Soft Seats"—a pink ticket marked "softness" is used therein (equal to an English third class), and the beds pull down in three tiers. No bed-clothes. |
| 3. Tourist Car. | 3. "Hard seats"—and on these people travelled across Siberia. Some pulled down, so as to make room to lie at length, rather like wine bottles in bins. |
| 4. Colonist Car. Used by Emigrants. | 4. Another—which is a sort of fourth class, with no windows, except one over the door. |

Literally four classes, only they are not called "Classes."

The longest train journey in the world. America claims much, but America cannot claim that. She can run on rails from New York to San Francisco, or from Chicago to the Mexican frontier, either of which is about three thousand miles—but from London (or Paris) to Peking beats that hollow.

36 AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

Seven thousand miles by train.

It's a long way, and yet before the war it used to be done with all possible comfort in eleven days.

Not so to-day. First across Europe and then across Asia. Half a dozen different tickets and worries galore, even when one gets away with one's life.

Yes, those thousands of miles across lands of different governments, different languages, different moneys, are a bit of an undertaking; especially when Bolsheviks make passports and travelling almost impossible; when it is forbidden to book more than a few days ahead, and if the limited space is filled one must wait eight whole days for the next train.

An adventurous journey truly. Had one realised how adventurous it would prove, one might have stayed at home.

Far more adventurous than crossing to Japan right on the top of the great earthquake of September, 1923, in that fine Cunard steamer *Franconia*, because in that case there were civilised people aboard, and a doctor to kill one—with kindness; a captain to bury one—"by permission"; and above all a splendid roof over one's head that kindly moved along from port to port and fed one on the sea, off Yokohama, where there were neither houses, nor food, nor roads, nor water, nor light, nor telephones—and babies were still unclaimed, whole cities being wiped out, and whole families swallowed up. It was that earthquake that had shortened my allotted visit to China the year before.

From Moscow once a week, every Wednesday afternoon, that five thousand miles—last lap of the trip—started.

Siberia was a word synonymous with convicts at one time. Russia for years sent all her undesirables to Siberia. Weird and awful were the stories told of men and women frozen to death, linked foot to foot with iron chains in the convict prisons of the north, where prisoners were left to work or rot and die. Siberia is bitterly cold in winter and desperately hot and dusty in summer. Just like Northern China in this respect. For Peking can be 120° F. in the shade, and 20° below zero six months later.

Would I have gone by Siberia had I known the tragedy ahead—had I foreseen the horrors to come.

I think not. It would have taken a stouter heart than mine to go into such tragedy, had I only known. But

one does not know what lies ahead—and in Siberia one does not even know what the Russian Soviet Government hides from everyone. RUSSIA IS IN ELINKERS. One knew that in these modern times people talked of Siberia's prodigious wealth and possibilities. A fable. Having spent fourteen days crossing its solitudes merely from Moscow to the Chinese frontier at Manchulie, and there held up (almost as a prisoner), one had a chance of knowing a little of the real Siberia. Will one ever forget?

Truly a hideous journey. One soon read all the literature. One dared not write even a letter—or make a note, so one just gazed vacantly out of the window, and there was little that was pleasing to gaze upon. Even maps were forbidden, and the names of the stations one could not read. Through hideous country; sometimes all sand dunes remindful of a seaside golf course, sometimes low "forest" land. Never a big tree; most of them have been ruthlessly cut down. But small trees and vast wastes, and sometimes the train passed a few black sheep bred for the making of winter coats, or a few cattle or pigs. But always, always the scene was dull, dreary, monotonous, flat and sad. Deserted villages and empty homes.

Occasionally we passed some sign of humanity—to wit, a miner's camp where coal is worked. There is plenty of coal, as of everything else, in that land of ice and snow, only most of the "everything" is quite ungetatable. There were a few ill-clad miners with their little lamps; but how different from our fat, healthy, well-to-do, warm-blooded men, who get their baths and their clubs, and their wireless sets, and their daily papers—aye, how different were these men. Even if they earned money they had nowhere to spend it; even if they had a book they had only a candle or oil lamp to see by, and in winter there are eighteen hours of darkness. A newspaper could only come once a week from east or west. And it was but the re-hash of the Soviet spoon-fed news issued from Moscow. They live lives of loneliness, hardship and desolation. And they know nothing—but taxes.

How on earth is Siberia ever to be made productive? What is the good of having natural wealth, where ice and darkness reign for eight long months in every twelve; where snow was still lurking in the corners even in June, where sand-storms made the summer scene as yellow for days as London in its fog-hours.

Millions of golden sovereigns would not make me live in Siberia. No—the men and women who live there are far worse off than the people in prisons in civilized lands, where concerts or lectures vary the monotony, and food changes and is always good. Life in Siberia is worse than any civilized prison to-day. Yet even in Siberia, in summer one may chance upon a few pretty things, and as we came towards the east there were wild flowers on sale at the stations. Children without shoes or stockings, and often barely clothed, thrust their little bunches of wild flowers out for the passengers to buy. As in all snowy lands, wild flowers spring up in profusion immediately the white carpet melts. There were forget-me-nots and yellow ranunculus, little white narcissus and small pansies, as also pale yellow anemones. They did not compare with the wealth of wild flowers of Palestine in spring, which is simply carpeted at places with every-coloured anemone, but they were pretty and gave a touch of colour.

Animal life, in its only prolific form, was represented by marmots. As we neared the end of our journey tens of thousands of marmots (a cross between a red fox and a squirrel) scampered along beside the train—and beat our speed—or sat up and begged. Pretty little things they are and used in every way for furs.

An occasional cow or horse worked at a water wheel or a plough or a cart, and its calf or foal trotted beside it. We rarely saw people, and when we did the beautiful old historical costumes we were led to anticipate were not forthcoming, and indeed the children and many others were miserably clad.

The Holy Land is a pretty desolate waste, but it is small—roughly the size of Wales—while this Siberian desolation—roughly the size of Europe—seemed doubly desolate through its vastness—one huge land of lonely despair.

On June 5th, after passing Perm in the night, the Urals (low hills), which are a Siberian Republic and part of the Russian federation, we noticed two readable names on a station—Kamishlow and Ekateringburg. It was the second day from Moscow and we were not far from Omsk.

Why was one name almost obliterated and the other newly painted?

“Hush! Don’t you know?” said a German in the train.

"Have not the slightest idea. Why?"

"Because," with subdued whisper, "the Tsar was killed here."

A cold shudder ran down one's back. One remembered the horrible story of the whole family being cruelly done to death. One had met on the train from Warsaw and spoken quite unbeknowingly to one of the three who had signed that death-warrant, thinking him quite a pleasant man, if hard and with a touch of cruelty in his face. And here, in a flash, one stood upon the platform of that wretched, murderous town, whose new name was taken from a rich merchant of the place—stood where that Royal family—its Head, wife, son, and four daughters—had passed to death at the hands of men with such names as Jankel Yourovski, Moses Uritski, Bela Kun and Djerdjinski. Here the Royal family had stood up in a row without trial and without warning, to be shot in a cellar, July, 1918.

Here had once been a flourishing town. Here under the so-called "thralldom" of the Tsars had been peace and wealth and prosperity. Look at it now—a miserable place truly.

The tragedy of that story—hazy in remembrance—made Siberia look even less inviting as one gazed from the window and twiddled one's thumbs, the only anticipation being a little walk to the dining-car, a fresh seat, a clean table and a decent meal to vary the dreary monotony and slow pace.

Anyway, one moralized, there was safety in our very slowness. Yet speed need not spell disaster. Think of the contrast with Canada, where, in November, 1925, the Government line known as *Canadian National Railway* accomplished the greatest feat ever done both in speed and distance with their new "Oil-Electric" engine. From coast to coast (Montreal to Vancouver) is 3,000 miles (to be exact 2,937.6), and that trip was made in 67 hours, and the motor did not stop once in the two days and 19 hours' run. Verily a record—and just 100 years after a Britisher invented the first locomotive, a son of the old country accomplished another world's record that may equally revolutionize transport.

It was Sunday morning, twelve-thirty a.m. to be correct, just past midnight of the fourth night out, June 7th. At

long and rare intervals we had passed some less squalid town such as Omsk. We had wondered if any happy souls inhabited any part of this lonely line of Siberian track, and for the fourth night had gone to bed in our little two-berthed compartment.

The moon was shining as we closed our eyes on the dreariness of the scene and dropped off into the land of slumber, the joyful peace of sleep.

Suddenly, bang, thump, blackness.

The train had stopped dead.

A shriek rent the air.

I was on my knees, violently flung from my bunk on to the suit-cases on the floor. Hat-boxes had fallen from above—umbrellas had descended from the hooks—and we could see nothing. Shoes and clothes had all tumbled down together.

My companion above called: "What is that?"

I knew not.

We were still. There was no movement, no light—utter, utter darkness.

Another terrible shriek.

"It must be an accident," I murmured in the darkness.

Being in the lower berth, or rather on my knees on the floor among the suit-cases, I reached out and opened the door. The moon which had shone so kindly when we went to sleep was completely obscured by clouds. Every light was out in the whole train. Not a reflection of any sort could be seen on either side of the railway track.

The two Russian conductors were talking loudly at the end of the passage. I groped along and reached their cabin. Both were on their knees struggling with matches to find something. By that tiny light, their voices revealed their anxiety to find this "something"—I slipped back, remembering the torch my elder and only surviving son* had given me, during the few nights I spent in London getting the six months' belated Soviet passport, when he laughingly remarked: "It may be useful in Siberia."

It was so dark I could hardly find it in the suit-case. Ah—yes, there it was. Switching it on, I ran back to the men. They turned and smiled, for they were still grovelling

*Squadron Leader Harley Alec-Tweedie. He was killed (after surviving the European War and Afghanistan) in a flying accident when in temporary command of Trans-Jordan, a few days after he received the first copy of the first edition of this book (April, 1926).

with lighted matches under the seat. The torch helped. It was the keys they wanted. *We were all locked in*, and the keys had fallen from the table like everything else in the impact.

Yes, an accident. In the wilds of Siberia—on a pitch-dark night, at twelve-thirty—something awful had happened; but no one knew what, and no one could see anything.

Was it brigands? Everyone had warned us against bandits, a suggestion we had laughed to scorn.

Scrambling into a few clothes, shoes and other amenities being almost impossible to find in the utter darkness and the chaos the impact had made of the small cabin, where everything had fallen from the shelves, at last I crawled down the steps on to the line, now our end doors had been opened. Just at that moment the valiant engine-driver, bleeding badly at the forehead and limping sadly, was crossing our passage-way to get at his engine and turn off the steam. That engine was hissing and spluttering and making a most horrible noise; it puffed volumes of steam many feet high, although that huge engine was literally upside down, lying on its funnel at the bottom of the embankment. The noise from the engine made the whole thing more horrible. Could it explode?*

It was well past midnight. There was hardly any light in the sky. No one could see anything or do anything; but all could hear the groans and cries, and the splintering of glass as people were being dragged through windows from cars lying completely over on one side. There were no hatchets in the train to burst the doors or windows. There was nothing.

Only as daylight slowly dawned—oh, so slowly—about three o'clock, could we begin to see what had happened.

Never, never shall I forget the horrors of that sight as it unfolded itself—dead, dying, injured and utter destruction in the lonely wilds of Siberia.

In the cheering light of early dawn one saw:

1. The engine had fallen down an embankment. All the wheels were showing upside down; it was resting on its own chimney many feet below. No one realizes the

*Three months later, when my old friend W. W. Grantham, K.C., crossed back to London, the engine-driver on his train was killed outright.

size of such an engine until they see it upside down, and stand beside it.

2. Ditto the coal wagon, completely twisted and also upside down.

3. The mail van had entirely disappeared. It had telescoped with the next carriage, and the postman was dead on the top of his letter-bags.

4. And the cook, who had also been sleeping above the sacks in the mail van, was dead too.

5. The contents of the mail-bags were scattered on the prairie. Most of them had burst open, although their seals remained intact. There lay the bags marked :

Great Britain to China, or Japan.

Poste Francais à Chine, où Japan.

Deutsches Post nach China, oder Japan.

Netherlands etc., etc.

The contents were flung far and wide. No one cared. Anyone could help themselves—and they did. Registered letters and parcels became public property. Does anyone wonder longer why letters do not reach their destination ?

6. The heavy baggage had been placed under the letter sacks, and the only trunk that survived was my much-travelled ugly little old British cabin-box, which came forth unhurt and was found lying twenty feet away.

7. Next the post van came a third-class coach. It had entirely disappeared. It had telescoped into the mail van.

8. A second class, like the engine, was half down the embankment with the windows of one side facing heaven. Those windows had been broken, and men, women and babies had been dragged out.

9. Our coach—number three—came next and stood intact—that old *International Sleeping Car* was the only thing that withstood the accident. Perchance it was one of those very cars that had seemed so luxurious and magnificent at the 1900 Exhibition in Paris, and had first inspired me with the desire to cross Siberia, but which I had thought so small and old-fashioned in Moscow station four nights before. Yes—there it stood.

10. Behind it came the restaurant car, which was afterwards turned into a hospital—until, hours later, after a short run, its under carriage was found to be so badly damaged that all those poor wounded souls had to be dragged out again.

11. The coach behind, the last, managed to survive for a few miles ; and then at Novo-Nikolaevsk it also had to be discarded, *until nothing of the original train remained except the sleeping car of European build.*

12. Four dead.

Three missing. (Dead, of course.)

Twenty-five badly hurt, and some died later.

Everyone more or less bruised or scratched or shaken—and this was the third accident in five weeks, and quickly followed by five more in the next twelve weeks.

As daylight increased one slowly realized the narrowness of the escape.

What a sight of misery. Poor second and third class passengers sitting on the rail side with their little bags and bundles—just the sort of bundles one sees with emigrants going to the United States, with just such crowded bewildered families. We had to take many of them and their bundles and babies into our coach until we got to a town where some sort of accommodation could be raked up for them. They were practically all Russians. Luckily the line happened to be double at this lonely spot ; but an accident meant that everyone lost his head, and no one had any idea what to do. There was a call for handkerchiefs or towels or sheets for the wounded. There was a constant demand for water—which became at last almost a wail, from the children—of which there was not one drop.

Unfortunately for people with luggage, German and American or Japanese trunks were all smashed to pieces in spite of their showy brass locks ; and shirts or pinafores, toys or books, shoes or coats were scattered in all directions on the prairie below the embankment. A young man with a small camera took some snaps of these. Hours went by before any kind of help could be got—and in the end it was nineteen hours and twenty minutes before we actually started on our way, free from débris, in the only car that had not to be left behind.

The first idea of brigands was quickly dispelled.

There were no people about, and no one from outside tried to touch a thing : the post and luggage were tampered with, but by people in the train. Not from outside.

What was it, then ? What had caused this ghastly accident in this lonely spot, miles and miles from even a village ?

44 AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

We all walked up and down. Help we could not, for we had nothing to help with, and were unable to talk to anyone ; so all we could do was to look and ponder.

A German pointed below our carriage and gave a significant nod. We looked and followed the direction of his finger.

Good God. Yes. The line ended exactly twelve feet ahead of our first wheel.

Here was a revelation. The line had been tampered with, the rail had been taken up—deliberately taken up—and if our heavy steel coach had gone twelve feet further (not much for a train) we would have gone over the embankment, and our sheer weight would have taken the restaurant and the other two coaches along with us.

What an escape. But the reason.

Ah, there comes the sadness. Most of Russia is White. They have no means of telling the outside world their sorrows, privations and horrors. No letters go through, no messages are passed. Their only chance of letting the world know all is not well is to descend to crime—experience having taught them that the sleeping car generally manages to keep the rails—in the hope that the few travelling foreign internationals will tell the story in their own countries. Tell of the utter rottenness and unsafe condition of the line, of the misery of the Russian people, and how when anything does go wrong there is no extra engine or coach, or doctor or bandage, or light or water or anything. And so perchance they had taken up the line.

Railway accidents are always terrible, but in Europe there are stations nearby, gangs of emergency men, new engines, new "everything" handy, above all, light, water and food. We were miles from anywhere and anything, and had literally nothing. If things go well with a train all is well. If things go wrong there is no power to put them right.*

After the accident, when everybody was running about everywhere to collect handkerchiefs for bandages, a young man came and implored the loan of a blanket for a woman who was badly hurt, and lying out in the cold and early morning dew on the roadway.

My friend gave the blanket willingly, and a sheet was attached thereto. Hours afterwards the blanket was

*After three years the service is a little better.

returned ; but the sheet had been put reverently over a poor dead soul who had perished. For that well-worn, torn sheet, given for the reverent covering of a man killed in a Soviet accident, we were made to pay. A small enough sum for, one might almost say, one's life, since either of us might have been the victim under the sheet. Happily, there were three chance doctors aboard the train ; two Russian and a Chinese student returning from Edinburgh, where he had attended a post-graduate course, and Liverpool, where he had been wise enough to go through the finest school for Tropical Diseases in the world.

Everyone said this Chinaman had been splendid ; but when I congratulated him, he replied in perfect English :

" I only tried—but I don't know one word of Russian, so I could ask nothing and say nothing, though anyway I could clean and bandage when I got hold of things to do both with."

No provision of any kind is made against these constantly recurring accidents. There were no implements for lifting the cars, nor a stretcher of any kind and yet for a hundred miles on end of that long Siberian route there is not a town where help can be called. And before the Revolution this was a great route.

One terrible cry had come from somewhere—nowhere. It sounded like a baby's. It was a heart-rending cry, and it went on for two hours or more.

Then rescue came. It was a dog, half buried in *débris*, a sort of English beagle and very badly damaged. Its companion bitch was dead. Nearby was a veritable Stoic, a man with both legs crushed beneath iron girders. He was not rescued for four hours, and yet he never uttered a cry, and then had to be pulled up the embankment lying on a rough bit of zinc or tin ; and hauled almost perpendicularly into the improvised hospital-restaurant car—only to be hauled out again many hours later and finally transhipped again and left behind at Novo-Nikolaevsk. There the whole town population assembled *after* the train arrived that Sunday afternoon, for naturally the news of our arrival spread like wildfire and everyone wanted to come and see ; and there a government kinema man made photos of the marvellous handling of the wounded.

Forsooth, the stretchers and doctors and nurses were fetched from the only fair-sized hospital on the whole route

to make a snapshot kinema of Russian efficiency ; for which we waited some hours—it took them so long to dress up. The wounded waited. Those films will never be shown outside Moscow methinks, but they will serve as splendid propaganda of the high advance of science and medicine in Siberia.

That poor youth, the passenger, who took snaps on the spot of the accident, was run in for daring to do so without "permission," which is never given, of course. We actually saw him being arrested, roughly-handled, and marched off with his little camera to God knows what prison horrors. And I had longed to take a photograph myself. It made one's heart sick. He probably had no idea he was committing a "crime." Had the officials known how my feelings were piling up from day to day I might have been arrested also—eh ?

Two other arrests followed—one, a woman, was dragged out the next day from the old odd carriages that had been collected at some wayside shanty, howling and in tears. She was torn from the compartment next ours and marched off by two ruffians—policemen,* presumably, as they had revolvers—hatless, luggageless, and bursting with grief. She was clinging to the handles of the coach stairway and was pretty roughly treated by the men. For what offence one knew not, and one was powerless in a land where one could not speak, and any act even of humanity may mean imprisonment without trial. There were ill-clad soldiers at every station of importance we passed through.

Again at Irkutsk on the sixth day another youth was being cuffed and hauled down the platform—why ? I know not. Russians are Asiatics, and hundreds of years behind civilization ; two facts borne in on one hourly and momentarily. "Scratch a Russian and find a Tartar" never meant anything to me before. It means everything now.

I never made one note or wrote one line but postcards and telegrams in Russia, never unrolled my paints or unwrapped the kodak. And so, in spite of spies, I came out alive from the land of the Free. The land of so-called

Free Speech,
Free Press,
Free Education—

*The police are now called Malitia. It may sound better, even if more war-like.

not one of which exists ; but where Free Love certainly does.

Alas, I saw scenes both in Russia and Siberia I could never have believed, and am totally unable to describe—God help Russia and her really Russian people.

We travelled on in our car, after leaving the dead on the prairie, and the dying and wounded at Novo-Nikolaevsk—for four days and nights, with no light but a candle. There was no spare dynamo anywhere obtainable in these five thousand miles from Moscow in Russia to Manchulie in Mongolia, from which Peking is still three days distant.

Nothing could have been more hideous than the journey from that only place with any pretension to the name of township, Novo-Nikolaevsk. In Siberia no railway official knows anything, no one can do anything. All Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday were spent grabbing food and searching out hard-boiled eggs—so they called themselves—though they were quite uncooked and ran all over the place on our return to the car.

We were without a restaurant, so we never sat down to a meal with knife and fork for the first four days and four nights after the accident. We passed two or three miserable station restaurants, so smelly and dirty and overcrowded we could only snatch cheese or bread ; less dangerous than weirdly-cooked foods. Light beer was less harmful than water, probably not boiled, or doubtful-looking milk. So beer, black bread and cheese served daily for breakfast. Lunch and dinner more or less repeated the dose, with a good piece of shortbread occasionally.

We had two candles at night in the whole Wagon Lits, one at each end of the corridor, and in this respect the first, second and third class people all fared alike.

I have roughed it in many lands and loved it. This was unmitigated, unnecessary misery.

CHAPTER V

LAKE BAIKAL—CHITA AND REVELATIONS

No water or basin-plugs—No birds—Enormous rivers without ships—Every bridge has a military guard—Bayonets gleamed—Had Soviet rule killed everything?—Village churches denuded of crosses—Turned into Soviet clubs—Young men and women being "sent" to mines in the North—Lake Baikal—Unutterable darkness—Mysterious green lights—The signalman wagged his flag—A wonderful scene and terrifying experience—The ninth day—Still two days late—Before dawn one is again aroused from one's sleep—In spite of passengers' efforts nearly left behind—Hauled out in a sand-storm at Chita—The horrors of another Government hotel—A mixed bag of nationalities—No water again, and no bath; no food in the hotel, and waited six hours for a cup of tea at 8.30 a.m.—My room had been a prison—"Transitory Passports" show wisdom—Three days almost a prisoner in Chita—Everyone a spy—Contrast of labour in Russia and Britain—My spy visitors.

SUPPOSING one of those candles had tumbled over and set the coach on fire when everyone was asleep; but why suppose—the reality was quite serious enough.

Meanwhile, apart from the dismal scenery through which we crawled, there were dismal things enough to be faced inside the car. What of washing and such minor matters, you may ask? Well, anyhow, we had paid for "Wash" (bed clothes). But gone were the amenities of washing or of the ordinary sleeping-car. When we complained to the Russian attendant that there was neither water nor basin-plug, he kindly put his hands cup-fashion under a tap which dropped a few drops after much persuasion, wetted both palms, and showed us how to proceed to wash our faces with two thimblefuls of drip—rubbed his hands as if with soap—and thereupon wiped the said hands upon his trouser legs. Ye gods, a first-class sleeper, and this was what was expected of us! Yet it is wonderful how one can face and survive circumstances. The first few days seemed horrible, but after several days and nights spent almost unwashed, one had got fairly accustomed to the deprivation. Cotton wool and English lavender water worked wonders.

All through Monday, the day after the accident, we passed dreary scenes of dwarfed trees (once forests).

No birds sang. Rarely one saw an ugly little wooden hut of a peasant. Krasnoiarsk is a really decent looking town on a muddy boatless but big river. Nearby we saw small hills and mid-June snow. Here a great "churchyard" of broken engines arrested our attention. The rolling stock is getting more and more worn out, and bits of "disaster" are constantly to be seen strewn along the whole route.

As I gazed from that compartment, which seemed smaller than a horse's stable stall, and had to be occupied all day and all night by two full-grown women—as we could no longer walk even to the dining-car for food or different air, or even for a chair to sit upon—I pondered on many things.

Why were these enormous rivers we passed, such as the splendid Obi, flowing some thousands of miles from Tibet or Mongolia to the sea, craftless? Open water in summer, ice-bound in winter. Yet once, not twenty years ago, they were surely the centre of trade? Where were the famous forests?

Every bridge, and there are several over those large, empty rivers in Russia, was guarded.

Bayonets gleamed galore.

The train always slowed down, and generally crawled over these fine structures built in the heyday of Russia; but even the best of bridges suffers from neglect, and as nothing has been mended or kept in any sort of repair from 1913 to 1926, a little matter of thirteen years and in a very severe climate, the bridges, like the tracks, have become unsafe. But the soldiers are not there to assist the train or the passengers. They are there to protect the bridges from bombs. It is notified no one should pop out a head, or a rifle may be popped to shoulder. There is another danger. One is warned to keep the blinds down when lights are on at night because of bandits. That warning was not necessary for us for the greater part of a week, as our train crossed the wildest parts of Siberia without lights after that disastrous accident.

What irony.

A contrast indeed was Harbin, where one saw a river full of ships. But Harbin was only a beginning of China. Chaotic China is thrice blessed and bountiful after Russia or Siberia. The Chinese rivers and sea coast are covered with craft full of merchandise. China may not be rich,

but she is up and doing. She is alive. She is earning her living—a very different story to that of the crushed lands and peoples under the Soviets.

Had the Soviet rule killed everything.

Yes, these water-ways had been alive with craft and business in the days of the Tsars, but under the Soviets the money dwindled. Capital and enterprise were starved. Outside patronage ceased, and the rivers and craft are derelict to-day. There is no business and no credit.

I noticed that little white village churches had often been denuded of their religious crosses and turned into Soviet clubs. Away with religions and up with Revolution is the motto, so the crosses were torn down.

Like everyone else, we had brought a large round tin kettle at considerable price at some wayside station, and like everybody else we had learnt to rush out, kettle in hand, when the train stopped to fill it with the boiling water provided free. This is a splendid institution on which Russia is to be much congratulated. If the water is boiling it is free from germs of typhoid and other queer diseases, and tea can easily be made on returning to the carriage. Russjans drink much tea—and their kettle is a means of attainment.

On Wednesday, 10th, we reached Irkutsk, the capital.

As we had then not had one decent meal since Saturday we made an effort at this town to get something in the restaurant. Nothing was ready anywhere. We were so late we were no longer "expected." Yet we were greedy for anything decent to eat. It was not decent. The restaurant was full of Russians waiting for a train to-day or to-morrow, to somewhere or anywhere, just as Indians squat about their stations. The odour drove us forth with the usual bottles of beer, of bread, shortbread and cheese, which we again ate with our fingers in our compartment by the light of a candle. There were a few oranges at a rouble and a half, or three shillings, apiece. The only fruit we saw on the whole journey.

The station was crowded. One wondered why, to be told later that the young men and women who strangely predominated in the throng were being sent "by order of the Government" to work at mines in the north. They would go by water, by wagon, and on foot to their destina-

tion. Exiles in fact, never to be heard of again by their friends in Russia. The hideousness of it all. The cruelty lurking behind.

On the night of Thursday, the 11th, we passed round the famous Lake Baikal. Fancy passing the only beauty spot of that weary land at night. But we were so late, everything was out of gear, and we were still without a restaurant or an electric light, and every coach was overcrowded. And then, yes, one suddenly remembered: "You will be all right provided you do not pass bandit-ridden Baikal at night. It is a dangerous spot of constant hold-ups."

Well, here we were—nearing Baikal, and at night, and without a light.

What strange fate pursued us?

Baikal is four hundred miles long. It is about as big as Belgium.

I was determined to see Baikal.

We were to be there about midnight, and it takes four or five hours to pass, as we were to do, the bottom end of the lake. Accordingly, I sat up. First by the light of one of the two precious candles I had brought with me in my suit-case; but later, to save it, I sat in the dark. It was a weird experience, on a cloudy night. Everyone else in the car had gone to bed. My friend, utterly worn out, was asleep.

On the south is a fine bit of engineering work—the work of Tsarist days. Below, ten, twenty, sometimes thirty feet, on our left was the water. A hundred or two hundred feet sheer above us on our right stood the mountains, and a dozen times or so we puffed through tunnels—the only tunnels for days.

Very, very slowly we crept along this dangerous single track, so slowly that at times we seemed to stop. Then we would dive into the blackness of a tunnel. It was horrible—even the gleam of light on the water of the lake had gone. My window was on the side of the lake; everyone was in bed because they could not see, but not a single light on the other side flickered from the passage, even against the tunnel walls. They were short tunnels, but they seemed insufferably long. Blackness, blackness, unutterable blackness. One stupidly wondered if the engine-driver could see, pondered on what would happen if another train met us on that single track, and then

remembered there was no other train. For there were only two trans-continental trains a week, one east and one west, and few freight trains in these lands of desolation. The Russian time-tables would make one believe there were more.

Still, want of sleep, want of food, and a bad railway accident had made me a bit nervy and stupid, I suppose, and touring round Baikal in the darkness of night without proper lights was a bit of a gruesome experience, and—ah! what was that?

Yes, yes, a green light, a flickering light—there, there, right down below, there. Weird, like nothing one had ever seen before in life's wildest experiences. What was it?

A queer low whistle from the engine and then—my face glued against the window—I saw a little green light move again below, mysteriously, many feet below on my left, silhouetted against the waters of the lake. Yes, it moved, that strange green light. What was it? Not another accident, and yet the stillness, the awful darkness and frightening stillness, the low whistle, the blackness and that green light might mean another accident or hold-up. Baikal is so famous for its bandits. Starving desperate men turned bandits. Everyone had said so. I caught my breath.

No—it was only a signalman; a poor creature smothered in fur, with barely his eyes visible, who was flag-wagging our train along that dangerous track. He had doubtless just investigated the tunnel to see that all was well, that neither snow nor avalanche, nor dangerous human was lurking therein with bomb or fire.

I shook myself, feeling how foolish I was to be afraid.

A tiny hut was always somewhere near the strange moving signalman, and a man or a woman with a lighted candle always sat at a window, apparently just to show that another, someone else, was alive and near by, or perhaps to mark the passing of the trains.

What a life amidst this loneliness and desolation, and yet in such a position of trust. A hundred passengers were utterly at the mercy of each man with a green lantern. A dozen times we passed these lonely men, a dozen times these different lamps wagged and the engine replied by a low dull whistle.

We hardly seemed to move. It was most weird, most

strange, for an unlighted train to dive into a narrow unlighted tunnel in the wilds of Siberia; most thrilling—especially when we knew what an awful tragedy had happened there a few weeks before, to be followed a little later by another, and another, as we learned subsequently. Never, never, never shall I forget that slow crawling train or the darkness of the scene as we passed for hours along the shores of that lonely Siberian lake. A wonderful scene and a terrifying experience.

Lake Baikal is vast. Great storms get up quickly. But its chief interest to-day lies in the goldfields to the north, which had just been taken back by the old European syndicate, which hopes to re-start them. They were once a successful proposition, not a mere game of bluff as most of the so-called goldfields are, which the Soviets advertise so widely, but then there were trains and boats and people to work; now one can say there are neither, at least, not European ideas of either.

Months have gone by, and one looks back to those Russian experiences and positively shudders.

Not, one should add, at the railway accident, since accidents may and do happen elsewhere—though hardly to the tune of one every fortnight or three weeks, on a lonely prairie and at night. While, without doubt, the Bolsheviks are spending money on mischievous propaganda, the deluding of Chinese students, spectacular aeroplane flights and the like, which should have gone to the mending of their worn-out rolling stock.

An American told me since, that a railway sleeper lasted eight years, but for heavy traffic should be renewed every four years. And seeing that the Siberian Railway has not been renewed since the war, no wonder it creaks and groans, and that engines and whole trains run off the line. On April 28th, 1925, Mr. Rudzutac, Commissary of Communications, reported in the Russian press that 120,000 goods wagons were in the "cemeteries," meaning useless and worn out, while Mr. Sokoloff owned the rolling stock then in use "represented only from 20% to 40% of the total in operation before the War." The railways, in fact, are in a pitiful economic condition, and of the total engines in use 4,000 are over thirty years old and operated at a loss.*

*Almost nothing had been done to improve it by 1929, in spite of lying time-tables, generally exaggerated.

No, it is not the accident that one shudders to recall, but the horrors of modern Russia and the sufferings of her people.

It was Thursday morning of the ninth day out from Moscow and not yet daylight. Almost the same hour as that of the accident of Sunday. We were two days' late now, in spite of every effort to retrieve time; for, in addition to the nineteen hours and twenty minutes originally lost, there had been further wastage through the picking up of odd engines that would not go, or odd carriages that had to be discarded again, as also through waiting at three so-called "towns" where the waiting-rooms reminded one of Eastern native quarters.

Passengers were constantly nearly left behind. For the train started without warning, and people were often seen scrambling on to the last coach only just in time to save themselves. But we were getting along somehow, and once past Chita, an important town, we should shortly be leaving the horrors of Siberia behind.

A knock at our door. It was 1 a.m.

"Aussteigen," was the unexpected call in the dull darkness of this small Chita station—kindly translated from the Russian by our German-speaking fellow traveller, Mr. S.

"Aussteigen? Then is this coach not going on to Manchulie (Mongolia) on the Chinese frontier?" half awake, I asked.

"No," he replied. "You must get out."

"Is another train waiting?"

"No; we are held up here!"

Held up. What a blow. Hurried dressing, and collecting of oddments which it was difficult to find, as we were still without lights and the station lamps only helped a little, and out we got.

"Why?"

"The car is sick—the car goes no further—all get out—Chita."

Well, here, over a week from Moscow, we shall find succour at any rate, and a good meal before we proceed comfortably on our way at daylight.

And so at Chita, a big town of Siberia, at 1.30 a.m. on that June morning, we all, with bags, bundles and babies, descended to the platform to await "orders." Of course

a train would shortly arrive and take us on our way, for we were still terribly late, and dirty and ill-fed and miserable.

No one spoke anything but Russian. So as usual we were deaf and dumb perforce. Droskys drove up through a dust storm with galloping speed. They must have put-to when they heard the whistles.

Not a living soul at Chita knew that we had had a fatal accident four days before ; a late train meant nothing to them. Nothing was ready. There were no spare coaches or dynamos—or restaurants. But stay—the new train should be ready any moment, and we should be happily speeding away from Russia, and Russian-trodden Siberia. Then came the news.

“No train—you go Government hotel.”

Here was another blow.

“But there will be a train later ? ”

“No,” was the reply. “Not to-day.”

Accordingly, through that blinding dust storm, much like the horrors of a Mexican “norther,” we followed our drosky filled with the bags, and stumbled through five or six inches of sand like that of the sea shore, to the *Government Hotel*. A Government Hotel anyway sounded possible, although after Moscow we knew a Government Hotel was a sorry place.

It was too dark to see much. There were nineteen of us from the sleeping-car, including a child. No one expected us. We were all cold and miserable ; for we had fared ill for many days and had dressed hurriedly. But not even a cup of tea could be got till eight o'clock, or six hours later, when “the servants would arrive for their eight hours' day.” It was the replica of a former experience at Houston, Texas, at ten at night, when every feeding-place had closed from eight p.m. to eight a.m. and travellers like myself had to sit for seven hours in a dreary, small, foodless station, waiting for an over-late train from New Orleans.

At last, after everyone had been talking in every language—no one seemingly having any authority or the slightest idea what to do with us—we were allotted rooms. We were now :

6 Germans

7 Japanese

2 English

1 Chinese

1 Odd

2 Russians

Verily a mixed bag of nationalities.

56 AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

In imperial fashion Mr. S. had demanded a room, and Mr. S. was the first person to be attended to. Mr. S. and the fluffy-golden lady disappeared into that room, and for all the three long dreary days we were forced to stay in Chita, Mr. S. never put his nose outside that room, and the "lady wife" bore him his food herself. He had known where danger lay. He never left his *coupé* after the accident. He never left his room at Chita—but once outside Siberia he was a free man.*

Life is full of surprises. At the Government Soviet Hotel at the capital of Siberia the surprises were manifold and weird.

1st. The balustrades of the stairway were all broken.

2nd. The brass stair bindings were many of them torn off.

3rd. Several stone stairs were smashed away altogether. Revolutionary damages of a year before were not yet repaired.

4th. A bed and mattress only were provided (as in India, where one expects this and takes one's own etceteras), but if the lady wanted "wash" she must pay extra for sheets and blankets and pillows about two shillings a night. The lady did require "wash," and the three nights' "wash," otherwise imposition, cost 6s., or \$1.50.

Behold at last a hot and cold water basin. Wonderful, wonderful. Only it wouldn't work. Every one of those basins (there must have been fifty rooms left as a legacy from the days of prosperity at Chita), with no plugs, or taps that would turn. And so in despair my aluminium one-inch-deep plate, with which I had fed and washed for days already, makes my basin for those three days of real honest and blinding dust storm in Siberia. Should I never be clean again? The bath-room was quite impossible, and the sanitation was beyond description and used by the entire staff.

There was no food whatever in this hotel. We all had to march out for three days through the dust storm to a garden-restaurant, where it proved to be extremely good—when we got it; but it was ten minutes away from our H.Q.—and that is a long way in a dust storm to reach a cup of tea. That was a Government kitchen. The

*The Soviet propaganda "lady" turned out to be the daughter of Rasputin, the disreputable monk. In 1928 she sued Prince Yousefoff for murdering her father, and claimed £200,000. She then went on the music hall circus stage.

workpeople got wonderful dinners for about one shilling a day, and we also ate the same, but paid considerably more. A repetition of the class distinction in the theatres of Moscow. And Russia says all men are "Comrades" and of one class only. A man can live in Russia for a penny-halfpenny a day. That gives him enough black bread to keep him alive, and hundreds of thousands live on it, and hundreds of thousands more haven't even got that munificence, and starve.

As I left my room at the end of a long hotel corridor (after 8 a.m.) to sally forth for that longed-for and six-hour belated cup of tea and breakfast, I turned to lock the door.

Heavens, what a shock! Above the keyhole on the passage side were the remnants of a brown Government seal the size of a saucer, and holes where large champ locks had been fixed. What on earth could such seals and holes portend? Further investigation outside the window disclosed the sockets for heavy iron bars. One realised with a shiver that the room had not long since been a Government prison. One's heart ached for the poor souls who had occupied my bedroom in this "Government hotel" before me.

Three days later a couple of fellow travellers chattering in the train arrested my attention.

"Wasn't it awful?"

"What was awful?" Looking up at me, one said: "We had a room above yours at that disgusting Chita hotel and could not sleep for the bed bugs, and so we were lying awake when we heard groans."

"Groans?" I queried.

"Yes, awful low, long, sad groans, and these groans and strange noises went on for hours. Then came a scuffle. Oh, God! it was horrible. We are perfectly certain somebody was a prisoner in the next room."

I said nothing. It was better not. I never even mentioned the sealing-wax marks on the door.

And this was Chita—where board and lodging cost about £3 a day.*

*The present state of Chita, the once busy, rich and prosperous capital of Eastern Russia, is that its factories are deserted, grass grows on the streets, the shops only possess the barest necessities, for the inhabitants could not purchase anything else, and the only motor cars in the long, broad boulevards are the two in use by the Komissar and his staff.

Really life is fuller of interesting surprises in Russia and Siberia than anywhere, and it is these incidents which show the real trend of events in the lives of the people. But wild horses will not drag me back by that route. Chita was the last straw, and one was glad not to have procured that return ticket in London, or that return visa.

The Soviets are very wise only to give "transitory passports," for one knows next to nothing if one merely passes on hour by hour and accidents don't happen to show one behind the scenes. It had been a regular fight to be allowed a permit to remain in Moscow—but here at Chita one was detained against one's will and had to leave more good British money behind. It cost about £10 per person for that halt, or £200 and more (viz., \$10,000), and for nothing but dirt and misery and to be eaten up by bugs. Some of the party thought our compulsory halt at Chita was a plant—merely to get us to shed that money for the pleasure of passing two and a half days and three nights in a Soviet Government Hotel (almost without sanitation mind, and infested with those bugs, for the "wash" did not keep them from walking out in processions from the mattress below), when we might have remained in our own old International sleeping-car, which by comparison was a haven of happiness.

Even Chita must come to an end, and before us lay visions of Manchulie, a town in Mongolia, and the frontier and entry into the peacefulness of China, for as yet we knew nothing of any trouble in the latter.

Ah—but we were not there yet. So we walked out to meals. We dared not make remarks above a whisper; we were watched if we talked to anyone, and eyed with suspicion if we asked a question. We lived a life of such tension, in fact, that we felt that much more Chita would give us that haunted look of misery visible on the face of every passer-by. Even the windowless houses looked haunted, burnt-out factories had the marks of bullets on many of their walls.

Few strangers stop at Chita, so there is no necessity to make show spots, and we had three days in Chita.

Pawnshops are everywhere, and thinking there might be something quaint inside, we marched in. From the ceiling hung dozens and dozens of field-glasses, below

dozens and dozens of large cameras ; once lovely dresses ; jewellery ; cases of fine underclothing ; beautiful bits of fur ; sable coats ; a brocaded pair of corsets.

It would have been unwise to buy anything, as it would have been a handle to say we had stolen it, and march us off untried to some Siberian prison. That shop told another tale of sadness. One by one the well-to-do had sold their personal possessions—even to their babies' little satin shoes and tiny lace bonnets—for bread.

That is what the Communists of England are aiming to accomplish ; let them peep at the misery of Soviet rule from top to bottom and see what they think of the result. It is the masses who have been most cruelly hoodwinked, and it is the masses who have suffered most severely. Let our people pause and realize what I saw. One laughs or cries at the contrast of labour in Britain and labour in Russia—two words suffice—Heaven and Hell.

The purpose of my trip across Siberia was to complete a book and finish pictures begun in China eighteen months before. My halt in Russia was simply to realize a long dream to see the Kremlin, but from the first everything was upside-down. I never did see over the Kremlin, and after leaving Russia and Siberia without a note of any kind, I now felt impelled to write all was not well in those lands. Silence would have been criminal.

Each hour of each day we were told we might leave our prison-like Chita hotel "shortly" ; but the days crawled on, and nights literally crawled, in that awful place where scenes of the revolution of a few months before were everywhere to be seen. Things were so awful, one began to feel quite jumpy.

A thump at the door, and a man appeared to tell me in French "to believe in no one but himself, as everyone was a spy."

Another thump at the door, and another man appeared to say :

"Be careful, you are watched," in English. "They know you are a writer." So this repeated the Moscow fact that I was under supervision. I dared not tell my friend.

The following day a third thump, and an Austrian came

to offer his help. I was afterwards told he himself was a Soviet Secret Service Spy.

There was no privacy, and to this day I do not know what it all meant.

A fourth thump. "I am of the Secret Service," openly declared the visitor. "I am G.P.U."

"Well, why come to me?"

But one's heart quailed nevertheless, and one felt that bolting the sealing-wax-covered door was no protection. People are arrested in Russia for nothing. I had written nothing. Sketched nothing. Photoed nothing. Had no letters or papers of any kind with me. And had said nothing. Then why come to me?

But methinks my luggage was overhauled on the train and as nothing was found, writer or no writer, I was kindly allowed to live.*

FOOTNOTE.

What is the position of Russia at the dawn of 1929?

There is little or no improvement since I first wrote this chapter. The country is undergoing a severe economic crisis; Soviet agents are penetrating every part to harry the peasants and force their grain from them. There is a scarcity of bread, meat and clothing; long queues for bread rations can be daily seen in the streets. Unemployment and alcoholism have both steadily increased. Ukhanoff, chairman of the Moscow Soviet, has officially stated that Moscow's unemployment has increased to ten per cent. of the population, there being now a quarter of a million members of Trade Unions who cannot find work; while, as to alcoholism, in 1923 nine million litres of Vodka were sold, in the first half of 1928 over 491 million litres were sold. The people seem to find this raw spirit (rye whisky) a panacea in which to drown their miseries.

Financially, Russia is worse off than ever. Credits from abroad have fallen off and it is becoming more difficult to secure the currency from depreciation. By orders of Rykoff, who is head of the Soviet Government and an executive member of the Comintern, violence has been used to secure subscriptions to a Peasant Lottery Loan. As every big industrial concern has been nationalized, funds are necessary for maintaining the machinery plant, as well as for new construction. But the people have learnt by experience, and fight shy of entrusting their money to Savings Banks; nor will they invest in Government Loans, except under compulsion. The rupture of trade relations with Great Britain hit Russia hard, and has made the Communists do their best to foster hatred against the British people. Use has been made of this national hate to work up the Red Army and to increase the Air League. The Red Army of 600,000 conscripts will be of great help in quelling riots, for considerable care is taken to thoroughly imbue every soldier with the ideal benefits that will result in maintaining Communist rule.

It has been said, and not without truth, that England, though a Capitalist State, is far more truly Communistic than the Soviet Republic, for the only practical form of Communism is a wise and generous support of the social services.

The methods of Great Britain, in its provision of pensions and insurance, free schooling and medical attendance, of public health and opportunities for amusement among industrial workers, are far superior to those which place any benefits within reach of the citizens of the Soviet Republic. In short, we believe in Evolution and not in Revolution, and are a century or more ahead of Russia. In 1927, the British Government terminated their Trade Agreement with Russia, and demanded the recall of M. Rosengolz and his Soviet Mission from London, as a result of six years of the Soviet Governments open flouting of all the political clauses of the Agreement. The existence in this country of Soviet House, which had been made the centre of violently subversive foreign propaganda, could no longer be tolerated, and our Government at last found in its action a ready acquiescence by all shades of political opinion among the British people.

My readers may ask, how it is that the Russian people are apparently so ready to be swayed by this rabid band of Communist agitators, who form its Government. But the answer is easy. Care has been taken that in every school the youth should be soaked with Soviet political propaganda. They are being taught only the things which the Soviet Party wants them to know, while the absence of any free Press results in public opinion being kept entirely misinformed as to what is going on, not only in Russia, but in every other country. Moreover, the proletariat are influenced *en masse* by theoretical displays, such as military manoeuvres, during which Trade Unions combines to maintain supplies and communications for the Red Army. In the Moscow district, the annual manoeuvres were held in connection with the International Communist Youth Congress, and included a burlesque attack on Moscow from the River Moskva by a "British Fleet." The attack was frustrated by companies of young Communists, who no doubt saw in the antics a foretaste of other conquests yet to come. It is all froth. Russia is utterly unable to support a serious war. It seems sad to think of a great country like Russia being so much in the grip of this small band of maliciously-clever Communists. The "Cabinet" still centres round Stalin, who though he only holds the post of General Secretary of the Communist Party is virtual Dictator. Lenin, before he died, had already made him his heir-apparent, for he knew that Stalin was a defiant world-revolutionary and would maintain his master's principles. How well Stalin has kept that trust can be seen in the large number of prominent Bolsheviks, including Trotsky and Radovsky, who have been sent to exile in European and Asiatic Russia, owing to their being suspect of not being sufficiently loyal. Even Titcherichin, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, has been sent abroad on "sick leave," a Chinese-like method of telling an official to clear out, for a time at any rate, until in solitude he can think the situation over, and return more chastened and amenable. The latest "stalwart" to be dealt with is Rykoff, who has been pronounced "unwell," and is therefore replaced by M. Schmidt, who has been nominated President of the People's Council. Only

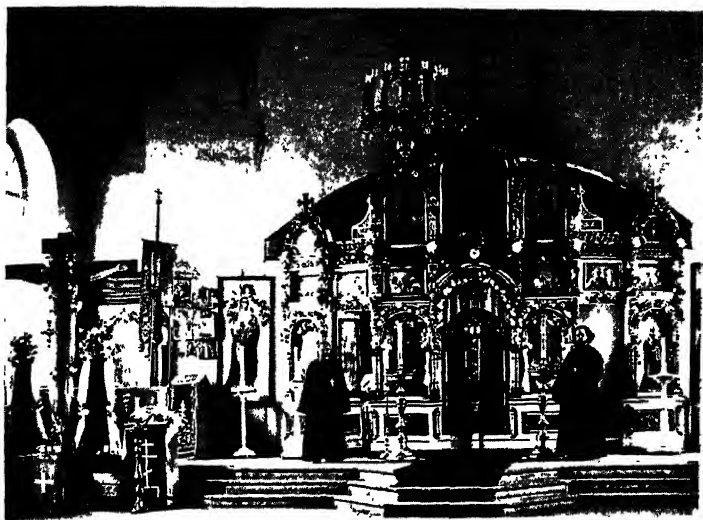
those who preserve a fierce loyalty to Communist ideals are retained. All this, however, suggests weakening rather than consolidation, and much quarrelling amongst themselves.

How long will Russia continue in her present state ?

I venture to predict that the people will rise, and that we shall see a pogrom which in its Slav ferocity will rival the worst massacres the world has seen. Careful statistics have shown that there are not more than one and a half million Communists in a nation of 150 millions, and the steadily increasing discontent of the peasants, whose efforts to provide food, clothing or homes for their families are hampered at every turn by Communist exactions, will show itself in a wild wave of national longing for a return to sanity and to things which make life worth living. For the second time the U.S.S.R. has postponed the date of the fifth Conference of the Union of Soviet Republics. It is now fixed for 13th April, 1929. The adjournment is due to the complaints of the peasants, who it is feared might have utilised the Conference to make propaganda against the Communist Party.

It is hard for half-starved, illiterate, ill-treated, cowed and crushed peasant folk to rise. But they will. Ten years of Soviet rule has disillusioned them.

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On the outskirts of Russia. An old (Greek) Church, Manchulie, Mongolia. In Siberia and Russia the crosses have been removed from many churches, and they are now used as Soviet clubs.



Mongolian beans for "cake" ready to be shipped from Dairen, South Manchuria. A colossal trade.



Oil being brought down by donkeys
from Mongolia.



Transport in Mongolia.

CHAPTER VI

MONGOLIA TO CHINA

Mongolia coming to the fore—Tens of thousands of camels—Manchurie, the Mongolian Chinese frontier, seemed like heaven—Clean officials and tidy uniforms at last—Collecting the smashed trunks from the railway accident—China looked so prosperous—Out of the frying-pan into the fire—Strikes and tragedy had begun at Shanghai—Harbin, and I had two baths—The Russians unveiled, from peasant rags to smart clothes—Mukden and the Chang Tso-Lin—Russia unfolded her villainous work—Live Chinamen packed in coffins—My return to China after sixteen months—Marvellous Japan, and Yokohama rebuilt—Japan's advance—She controlled herself and earned her independence—Similarity in love for children between China and Japan—The babies' hairdressing.

MONGOLIA is playing a more and more important rôle in far Eastern history. Once it was never heard of except as a vast land of wild people, with a great river running into Lake Baikal, and one big town called Urga half way down towards Peking. Along those sand dunes and mountains the camel caravans plodded with caravan-tea (tightly compressed like a brick) for Russians to drink in glasses with lemon.

There are still the camels, tens of thousands of them, and as it was summer there were baby camels too, trotting at their mothers' tails. They still plod along that thousand miles with goods to exchange; but all in a moment, ever since Russia began to take such lively interest in China, Mongolia has been carefully looked after and nursed by the Soviets. The railway did not materialize, for Russia cannot keep up what she has got and has neither money, nor engineers, nor credit, nor engines; so the camel track is now a motor and aeroplane route from godless Soviet Russia of God-Lenin, to the humbug Christian General at Kalgan on the Western Mongolian frontier. From there it is but a jump to Peking.

At last, yes, thank Heaven, at last that long, sad, dreary journey across Russia and Siberia came to an end. Want of food and want of sleep; railway accident and bed bugs, and spies, had all done their work, and we felt well-nigh worn out. But even horrors end, and this

horror ended, although it will for ever remain a nightmare.

At last we reached the frontier town of Manchulie in Mongolia, to find that the officials did not know that there had been any accident. To them, it appeared, as to those of Chita. The arrival of a weekly train without its mail-bags now three days late was a mere trifle.

They barely lifted their eyebrows at such a common occurrence ; and asked : " How many killed ? "

So we changed our train, and bought more tickets, and lost on more money exchange—and before us lay another troublesome luggage examination.

Ah—but here in Manchulie it was clean. Lovely clean, canary-coloured uniforms decked the Mongolian-Chinese policemen, while the gentlemen seeking, and finding, opium hidden in odd corners of people's luggage, wore beautiful white tops to their caps and the badge of Customs officers. Here at last we breathed civilization. The ruffians with guns and revolvers planted at every Siberian station of " Free " Russia were replaced by a few washed, tidy representatives of law and order. A decent, clean, moderately priced meal was served ; and beyond, as one hoped, would be a quiet, peaceful China and a happy year for me.

Everyone's luggage from the sleeper-car was searched most politely by the Chinese Customs officials, but there was nothing dutiable.

We had shaken off the dust and thralldom of Soviets. The feeling of relief was so intense, it made me realize how seriously these horrors had taken hold of me. It seems incredible ; but it is true : I knew now I had really been afraid ; yes, for one whole month, although I had not owned it to myself. Here one could breathe again and shake away one's fears.

When I had finished with my luggage and thoroughly enjoyed a really civilized breakfast in cleanliness and order, I heard bad language in German, and then a call.

" Gnädige Frau——" pierced the air.

Yes, I was wanted. All the white-capped, neat Mongolian-Chinese Customs House officials were standing round the débris of luggage of the two unfortunate Germans, who had left their homes for the first time in their lives, to put up boilers somewhere, that their German firms had sold to China.

" They want us to unrope these smashed trunks,"

they cried, purple in the face with excitement. "They say they must see inside. We won't. We have suffered enough and paid enough. Gnädige Frau, please help us."

"More than a week ago those trunks," I quickly explained, "were smashed to atoms, as you see. All those shirts and boots were scattered on the railway line near Omsk. These poor men packed them up, carried them in bits and bundles to the sleeping-car themselves, and paid and tipped everyone for permission to do so."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am sure; I saw them myself. Then at some station along the line they bought these ropes and have carefully made up the three broken trunks into roped packages to resemble three trunks, with side pieces and top pieces of wood to hold them together. Believe me, they are just honest German workmen and they have suffered badly. Don't be hard on them."

All was well. They were not unpacked, but their "trunks" were considered in such a helpless state that the Customs insisted on packing them into old Cretonne covers, sewing them up, and marking them with leaden tags, "in bond."

Very nice and safe for the train-wreck débris—but those two poor Germans had to tip again and pay for the cretonnes.

Their gratitude was unbounded—I had really done nothing, but they actually had tears in their eyes with their thanks—the terror of Russia and Siberia had entered their nerve-racked souls, poor fellows, and they were shaking all over with anxiety and worry. "But our troubles would soon be over," I told them, "for we are nearing Harbin. Harbin was China proper, and in China we should find peace. There would be no more accidents, or prison-like hotels, or spies, or horrors of any kind." They smiled all over and appeared intensely relieved, poor souls.

Alack, on arriving at Harbin (which, also, had not yet heard of our accident) we learnt that *serious* trouble had broken out a fortnight before in China. Things were very bad. Dangerous rioting, death, strikes, and another Boxer rising against the foreigner seemed imminent. Here was another blow.

It was a clear case of *Out of the frying-pan into the fire*.

We had not seen a paper later than May 25th—that was

more than three weeks before—and so knew nothing of the riots in Shanghai, with 400,000 people on strike, of Peking aflame with agitators, of strike riots in Hong-Kong. Indeed, things were so bad that a repetition of the Boxer émeute seemed not at all impossible, and even worse.

At Harbin we spent some hours. The British Consul-General and his charming wife met us. We were borne off to a lovely home and given baths. Our clothes were brushed and our shoes cleaned, and we were fed—yes, fed in a civilized manner, with silver ware, and flowers on the table, and serviettes and well-cooked food.

I had two baths. Don't laugh. It is true. One soaping and scrubbing did not seem to be enough after a month of filth ; so when that was over, I simply began the whole process over again, and nearly finished a new cake of soap in my endeavour to rid myself of the dirt and dust and demoralization and barbarism of Russia.

When we got back to the train some hours later, the three Russians were being escorted by a body of people to a special saloon. The ill-clad burberry lady was now out of Russia—she was in green satin—yes, green satin—and lace, and with a fine pink rose on a very smart hat.

The gentleman of Imperialistic mien was also in smart clothes.

The Moujik, or servant, or coalheaver, or whatever Mr. Long Legs really was, displayed a fine grey flannel suit, with a white collar, and a white silk tie. What transformations. The Soviet Russian had thrown off the chrysalis, and was hardly recognizable in all this glory and richness of apparel.

"You are very fine, mein Herr," I laughed, when we met on the platform.

"Wir haben uns ein bischen gewaschen," he replied.

Yes, I too "had washed myself," had in fact done a great deal of washing, but I had not changed my outside wardrobe—suit-cases did not permit of that.

And Harbin became more and more under Soviet influence from the day of our arrival with the Russian trio.*

* Mr. S—— turned out to be the Russian Ambassador on his way to Peking, with all his "Commands" from that Secret Conference held in the Kremlin. And the fluffy lady tore off full haste to Canton, 3,000 miles south, and in 12 days was lecturing with Borodin on the virtues of Soviet ways.

At Mukden the British Consul-General again came to our aid. I had originally arranged to stay a week in Mukden to get clothes washed and get clean myself, to receive and send letters and to paint, so fascinated had I been with its fine old walls, forty feet high, and city gates months before. Besides I wanted to see the great Chang Tso-lin, whom I had romantically pitched on at that time as the strong man of China. Mukden was China, old China, and it was this I had started out to write about and paint, and was here to finish my first visit to China in fact.

Glancing back, one month after leaving Moscow, July 3rd, 1925, that is, one sees things more clearly, sitting quietly at Dairen, near Port Arthur, in South Manchuria.*

One sees again the ruin of Russia—a Russia demoralized, fearful, impoverished, disease-ridden. The land of hideous political bluff and bombast. One realizes the camouflage of a few Soviet men and women escorting strangers about Moscow, and pouring salve into their eyes.

No, no, it won't do. Russia is a ruin.

Then one looks back again, and sees the prosperity of Poland—the work, the gain, the determination of those other Jewish people, and its quickly prosperous result. For in four or five years Poland has practically re-established herself. See again the grim determination of the Germans to recover trade, with success following.

And then one turns to China, the China in which I sit as I write, and one feels sorry that China, with its great traditions, its fine race, should allow that Soviet Government to knock at its door and wreak its vengeance on civilization by striving to devastate China as it has devastated Russia, and would like to devastate all civilization.

No mincing matters in Russia. They want to disturb China, but they don't want to house any Chinese. The Government know of the starvation in Siberia, and to stop it, in July, 1925, issued a reminder that emigration from China or anywhere else would mean payment of a sum no coolie could afford. The things ordained were :

Corporal punishment, or Imprisonment with hard labour, for entering without a Passport. [For which he could not pay.]

*Three years later many of the merchant Princes of China had left for Dairen to live in safety under the Japanese.

This document emphasizes the fact that there was neither sufficient food nor work in Siberia for outsiders ; and this in spite of the wonderful puffs the Soviets get put into all the papers of the world, of Russian and Siberian prosperity.

But it is mighty difficult to keep a Chinaman out of anywhere when he wants to get in, and many of them have even crossed the Pacific from China to Honolulu in coffins, not dead—oh, dear, no—fed daily by their sailor friends, and all alive on landing, after an opportunity occurred in harbor to come to life again.

Thus the Chinese who have not crept into Siberia have packed themselves into coffins and landed elsewhere.

China knows how to wait.

She is never in a hurry.

The Chinese cut the lawns in the slowest possible way. Half a dozen women in their little trousers and apple-green, magenta, blue, or scarlet stockings, with their minute little feet, sit on mats the size and shape of a towel, before my window. Each woman plucks out the weeds, and with her fingers nips off the top of the grass over two inches long. This she puts into a little pile on her mat. Only a tiny pile, 'tis true, and when she can reach no more, she pulls herself and her mat, with the left leg acting as a sort of rudder behind, a couple of feet further along and begins again.

It is very efficacious, because every weed is treated separately ; but it is hardly as quick as a motor grass-cutter. But that is emblematic of China.

Between my two visits to the Land of the Dragon, barely sixteen months had elapsed. Yet what changes one found for the worse. Between my two visits to Japan, in the Autumn of 1923, Japan had just suffered that awful and terrific earthquake a few weeks before I landed in the ruins of Yokohama. It was then a rubbish heap. Two years and a half later there were fifty miles of new roads. Drains, mains, electric lights, telephones and general débris had all been cleared away. She had had to recover from the greatest catastrophe this world had ever known. She had recovered, and she had done even more. She had gone ahead. Where no habitable building had been standing in Yokohama I found a new town rising from the débris. Where I had seen them burying the dead and had sketched the chaos of the Grand Hotel with three

hundred corpses still below it, that hotel had risen to its second floor in the thirty months.

Marvellous Japan. She was growing rich.

On the other hand China had begun civil war in January, 1924. Soldiers had guarded my trains through Manchuria from Korea, fur-coated soldiers had stood in rows at stations and sidings, and later far away to the south at Canton guns fired over my head.

Eighteen months later, in June, 1925, when I crossed out of Siberia into China, the people had barely given up fighting one another. That civil war had decided nothing, so for a change they had turned on the foreigner while they prepared for the next civil war due in a few months time. And truly it came before I left her shores.

China had impoverished herself, deposed her Emperor, in the sixteen months, and had gone steadily backwards. But she had not yet fully realized the evil influence in her midst. And I had brought fresh propaganda.

Japan, under her Royal house and wiser government, had gone as steadily forward.

China, with a dozen warring lords and no consolidated government, had not only retrograded politically, but heavily impoverished her own people. For if the foreigners lost business during those riotous months, the natives suffered even more heavily. By August the poor coolie was in dire straits, except in the interior, and in the interior he did not even know there was trouble. Neither did he care.

People are continually comparing China and Japan, but that seems, to the casual onlooker, a hopeless proceeding. They are different.

China is the greater, the older—the original, so to speak; but her retrogression has gone on steadily for hundreds of years, and now the twentieth century finds her quite unable to rule herself or keep any sort of law or order. Peking is peeling. And China is chaos. One tin god after another tin god is put on a pedestal, safely robs everyone and everything, and is finally hurled from power—but with his pockets full of gold. These military adventurers, or governors, called “Tuchun,” for a time control lawless bands of rabble called soldiers. The latter are not paid and become discontented, or are bribed to join the enemy.

China, let me once more repeat emphatically, has in no way proved herself capable of self-advancement or self-

rule; and at this present moment not only foreigners, but millions of Chinese also, know that the only peace and security in their country lie in the foreign gunboats and foreign soldiers in or near the Treaty Ports.

Japan, on the other hand, who is quite modern by comparison, has consistently gone forward. Her rulers have ruled. Her businesses have been well controlled and have prospered. She has none of the natural wealth of China; but she buys and manufactures. Her chimneys smoke. Her ports are busy. Her railways flourish. Japan is the industrial country of the East—she controlled herself. Thereby she earned her independence. She got it.


A delightful trait both of China and Japan is their kindness to children. Herein they are similar. They love their children, and they revel in showing that love openly and unashamed. How different from Russia, where the children seemed to belong to nobody. The Orientals may love their wives; but if they do, they manage to hide the fact extremely well, and love of a dumb animal does not exist. With the children all is different. They carry the babies, and nurse them and hug them, and lead the toddlers by the hands and show them off as their proudest possession. It is very nice, very human, very lovable.

But the woman in both lands is the beast of burden, and the Japanese woman invariably seems to have a "thing" aged from one week to three years tied on her back. She cannot even lean back when she sits in a tram car, or she would squash the baby, which she continually, asleep or awake, hitches up into position. A wide sash goes under its arms and across her chest, under its behind and across her middle, where it is tightly tied. So the child really hangs from under its arms and under its legs, and looks remarkably like a frog.

In both countries there are babies to right of you, babies to left of you, and babies everywhere.

The Chinese and Japanese babies are generally shaved. They are born with an inch or more of hair, but as soon as the mother can toddle out she takes the infant to the barber. On a fine day she nurses it in the street, and then one sees the barber lather the little head and shave it while the child enjoys its meal. Small tufts of hair are allowed as decoration sometimes, otherwise its head is bare.

The tufts are left according to personal fancy. Sometimes in front. Sometimes behind. Sometimes over one ear. Often they are bound tight with a strip of red braid for luck, but the child always looks more like a doll than a human child in its early years. But these babies of the Pacific will grow up. They will become men, and then—then they may fall under the cruel lash of war.



CHAPTER VII

" MYSTERIOUS MANCHURIA "

Probable repetition of Boxer trouble of 1900—Everyone expectant—Mukden fascinated me—Telegram ordering me to move on—Everyone said . " Get out of China "—Anti-foreign riots imminent—Missionaries had to flee their posts—Dairen and peace in South Manchuria—A bad leg—Looking back—Siberia too Arctic to be a white man's land—Russians huddled in Moscow Station imploring for passports to get out of the country—The impossible invariably happens—Chinese and Japanese living happily together in South Manchuria—My first entry to China, the other way round, had been by Japan and Korea—Sixty soldiers parade the trains—The wonderful searchlight in Manchuria—A searchlight in Palestine—Similarity of Mukden and Jerusalem—The old home of the Manchu Dynasty.

NEVER, in sooth, since the Boxer trouble in 1900 had there been such days of dire anxiety in China as those we landed into. It was a vital moment for the foreigners. No one knew from day to day what was going to happen, or whether they would all be murdered before nightfall. The 15th June was a day of serious anxiety in Peking, and the turn of events hung in the balance for hours. Better councils prevailed.

But things in China had become pretty bad by the time we reached Mukden, so instead of staying a week, we decided to follow the advice of urgent telegrams and go south next day.

That morning, however, we took a car, as I wanted to revisit those delightful old quarters of the Chinese city. We did so. Riot was going on inside, where the students were holding a boisterous meeting. Yes, there was trouble in Mukden that day, and that day only, for Chang Tso-lin is a strong man, and knows how to rule. (Of his tragic end, more anon).

We went to the famous temples.

Oh, such a sand storm! It was Chita over again. The car several times stood still to let the dust pass by, as the driver could not see a foot before him. The poor Chinese coolies clutched their hats, and tied them on their backs or behind their rickshaws for safety.

We reached the tombs. We had a *special* permit, so as

not to be worried or imposed upon. It helped not at all.

Two men refused to show us anything, and held out their hands while menacingly demanding money.

We had just heard that the coolies in Peking had tied notices to their rickshaws that they would not carry British or Japanese.

“Don’t let us add to these political complications,” I said. “Once inside that gate, they might become more menacing in this lonely place, so just let us turn round and go back. I hate to do it; but they look so strange that it is wiser to sacrifice a little than to bring troubles to others.” So we left without going inside the famous Temple.

The great Chang was not at Mukden. He was then ruling in Peking.

Mukden fascinated me on my former visit. It is an amazingly queer and quaint old town. There is nothing whatever modern about it, except the hotel. In those great walls that surround the town there are many arches, and every one of them is more quaint than another. In Mukden the people are Chinese or Manchurian. They wear the dark clothes of the Far East. The camels are supplanted by broad, heavy-furred dromedaries, which, instead of crossing the tropical deserts of Egypt and Syria and Mesopotamia, plod for half of the year through the snow of the Gobi desert from Mongolia. Both peoples squat somewhat alike in their queer bazaars. They live and eat and sleep and manufacture the most amazing things in the most amazingly limited space. By religion many of them are also alike.

Star Beach, South Manchuria,

Sunday morning, June 21st, 1925.

The birds are singing in the white flowering acacia trees, so white, they look almost like snow. I luxuriate in a fine large room with an airy bathroom adjoining. Hot, ’tis true, for the thermometer registered 82°F. at 5 a.m. and rose 20° in a few hours; but still there is comfort, peace, joy, civilization at this Japanese watering-place, on Chinese soil, six miles from the great open port of Dairen.

Could that old junk so lazily basking on the calm green sea be a true junk, could that sea be real sea? Is it possible that it is only fifteen days and nights since, at the same hour, we stood among that wreckage in Trans-Siberia.

Why, it seemed years and years ago. Was it merely a bad dream?

No, there were the scratches and awfully bruised leg when I was thrown from my bunk, to remind me of the horrors of that hideous night on the lonely desert, and the even worse—because slowly drawn out—horrors of those 4 days and nights without proper food or light or water.

Yes, there were the marks, so it could only be fifteen days between the heavenly peace of this pretty little Japanese watering-place and the Hell of Soviet Moscow, where all brains and money and energy are concentrated on Propaganda with its world-reaching results, and where so little is done for the individual except to tax and squeeze him. Better to die than to live in Russia at the present time. That this is realized by the folk is visible on every face. No one ever smiles. Poor Russia. And once I loved her.

Yes, Siberia is a rich land—to be avoided. It is too arctic to be a white man's land, no intellectual man's land. One knows Iceland and Lapland; they are cheerful and beautiful by comparison. Their people for hundreds of years were born and bred and inured to cold, and are well educated and able to support the hardships to which their blood and brain have become accustomed. But Siberia has no population. It will have to be imported—imported to what? To a vast land that is a vast prison.

Was China going to copy Russia? That would be terrible. Then we remembered another strange sight—a herd of miserable emigrants huddled together in a road near a great square in Moscow.

What were they?

Well, those people had been in Canada and the States and had worked hard and made money, and reading in the papers sent from Russia of the present marvels of their own home country, had been lured and persuaded by the Soviets to sell up and return thither. They did. Each one took his nest egg of fifty or five hundred pounds and landed with it in Russia. They found a myth. Months passed; they were beggars, imploring the Shipping Companies to take them back to where they had come from. This was impossible because of the new emigration restrictions, so there they sat, huddled, hopeless, wan and weary. What would become of them? Perchance free shipment to Siberia.

In Moscow one had heard rumours of arrested clerks and students, of anyone and everyone, and for anything or nothing. One had rubbed one's eyes and dried a tear and said: "This cannot go on."

But it did go on.

"On the night of July 2nd," said the Paris *Le Matin*, "eighteen former pupils of the Emperor Alexander Lycée, at Leningrad, were executed without trial and sixty others deported to extreme North Russia or imprisoned."

"The paper says that those executed include Prince Nicholas Galiszine, who was seventy-six years of age and who was the last Russian premier."

"The ground of the executions was an alleged plot in Paris against the Soviets. The plot actually consisted, says the paper, of raising subscriptions to relieve former pupils of the Lycée now destitute."

Quickly following the shooting of Prince Galiszine, the Soviets took out an old gentleman of ninety, Count Fredericks, the last of the late Tsar's ministers, and shot him. Even at ninety one is not safe in Russia.

Is poor China to follow suit?

And there is no use denying the fact that from 30th May for months foreigners all over China were in serious danger, and until the arrival of the British Expeditionary Force their safety was on a sliding scale and their discomforts profound. It took five months for the boycott even to begin to fizzle out.

Unwittingly my English friend and I had landed into this. The experience of Russia and the accident in Siberia had been too much for her feelings. She gave up all idea of going to Peking, and left for Honolulu instead.

I stayed on and watched the unfolding and re-folding of many strange happenings during those dangerous days for foreigners in China, and somehow they so often linked up with our mysterious diplomat and the Kremlin.

In China the impossible invariably happens. The unexpected gives a flavour to existence in this prismatic kaleidoscopic land of hurley-burley.

Still ruminating at Dairen, where Chinese and Japanese live so happily together, I pondered:

Right round the world and back in China. I had left China in Civil War, returned to Anti-Foreign War, and left again in Civil War; and all that occurred in two and a half years. For the journeys are tremendous—roughly

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6,000 miles from Moscow to Mukden, and Mukden still 24 hours by rail to Peking—or again, from Peking, the capital of China, to Tokyo, the capital of Japan, one hundred hours, and that in a well run first-class train with only a few hours on an equally good boat. This gives one some idea of distance.

That first entry to Mukden in January, 1924, had been by Japan and Korea, the second the other way round the world by Russia and Siberia. How much, and yet how little, had changed. How different and yet, in some ways, how alike. Looking back, I almost wonder I ever made the second venture.

Entering Mukden the first time on a wonderful winter night, by Korea, was almost uncanny—everything was dark in that magnificent sleeping compartment-car of the South Manchurian Railway, which slid along the wide-gauge lines of Manchuria from Korea.

Sitting idle at my window, peering out into the darkness barely illumined by a few stars in the high-domed dark frosty sky; suddenly there was a blinding light.

Was it the soldiers of the Civil War everyone had warned me of? Was it these same bandits that a few days before had held up the whole train, stopped and searched the passengers and denuded them of everything valuable they possessed, leaving them to shiver in the bitter cold of a Manchurian winter night?

Again a bright brilliant light.

It faded away. It came again.

Almost before I had time to realize it, I saw the brilliance was enhanced by the pure whiteness of some feet of snow spread over the desert. It was a gruesome moment; an exciting little thrill, with a feeling of uncertainty and the horrid jumble of dissuasions of kind friends who said it was mad to do the journey at all in the disturbed condition of the country under Civil War misery. The war of a few months hence was simmering. Everyone predicted revolution and war as soon as the snows melted and the troops could be moved. Had it come already? Anyway, Civil War or no Civil War, the foreigner up to then was always respected in China. All foreigners had been safe since 1901, and till June, 1925.

And after all those tense seconds of doubt, after visions of Chinese bandits, of exposure, misery and perhaps death, after all it was nothing more than the light from our own

immense searchlight put on the front of the engine. This and the other two in the last coach, which was full of soldier-guards, were flung from side to side every half-minute to sweep the horizon and see there were no bandits or robbers or military deserters lurking on the lonely desert track.

A wondrous light truly, and veritably alight, as was not the equally surprising and vaster-sized searchlight on the top of the Mount of Olives, where Kaiser Wilhelm built his so-called Hostel for Pilgrims. The searchlight in Palestine was at the top of the church tower at the Byzantine Palace, where I was lucky enough to spend a happy week with the Governor-General, Sir Louis Bols, about Christmas-time, 1919—just two years after he and Lord Allenby had taken Jerusalem, and while our troops were still evacuating Syria, which we had just handed over to the French. This peaceful German searchlight just referred to, of vast proportions, stood on the top of the church tower. It was reached by 250 steps. The church itself was 5,000 feet perpendicularly above the Dead Sea (the Dead Sea is strangely enough 1,200 feet below the level of the sea), so its view was superb. Palestine is smaller than Wales, and that searchlight could look into its very corners. Who can doubt but that the All-Powderful proposed to add to his titles that of King of Palestine? Anyway, he had planted his busts in bronze and marble in the Byzantine Palace, or fortress, which he had built, and painted his colossal form upon the ceiling of the church that contained the searchlight—painted his own portrait along with the Saints and Prophets, and even facing Christ Himself. And now the Soviets are modelling and painting Lenin and themselves and selling the models and pictures by force to all and sundry.

Palestine for the Jews is a strange cry, when the Holy Land contains to-day some 90 per cent. of Arabs and only some 7 or 8 per cent. Jews. But the Jewish Bolsheviks prefer not to go there.*

Our Manchurian searchlight was also for warlike purposes—war actually in being—and it was extraordinarily powerful. In fact it added greatly to the beauty of that snowy trip across Manchuria.

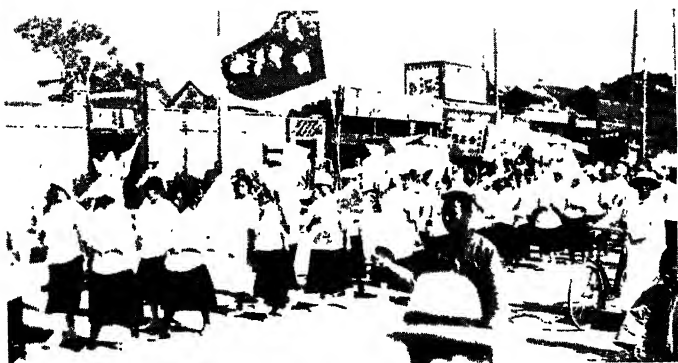
* That thickly-walled Byzantine Palace was seriously destroyed by earthquake in 1927. The first great earthquake in Palestine for over 100 years.

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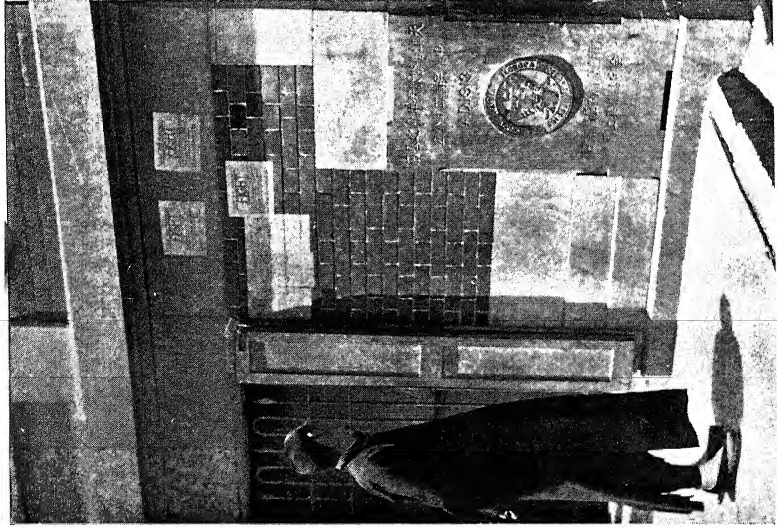
But one had not come to China for warlike reasons, and all these soldiers at stations and in trains, foretold one would not be able to get about much alone. Hence—after being constantly frustrated in my plans—my return, when things looked more propitious, at least as far as I knew them.

There is no doubt about it, there is quite a similarity between the ancient far-eastern town of Mukden and the less ancient middle-eastern town of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem bazaars are the same to-day as they were when Christ walked through them two thousand years ago. The streets of Canton in Southern China are doubtless the same to-day as they were two thousand years before Christ was born, when the town began its existence. But why moralize? The old home of the Manchu Dynasty cast its spell over me those wintry days on the border of Civil War, and when I returned later it was just as alluring, but Anti-Foreign War made it an impossible halting-place, and the mysterious diplomat well stirred the Mess of Pottage.

Shall I ever make a third venture to stay quietly and peacefully in Mukden, I wonder.



Demonstration of students, Peking, June, 1925. 1. Girls.
2. Outside the Foreign Office, called Wai Chiao Pu. 3. "School-
men."



By kind permission of

Foundation stone of the American Y.M.C.A., Tientsin
—the headquarters of the Student agitation, June-
July, 1925.

[The North China Daily News.]

Down With Autoeraey!

FIGHT

THE SHANGHAI CASE TO THE END.

It is Not We Demand:

1. Indemnities paid for all dead, dying & injured;
2. British Police must With-draw;

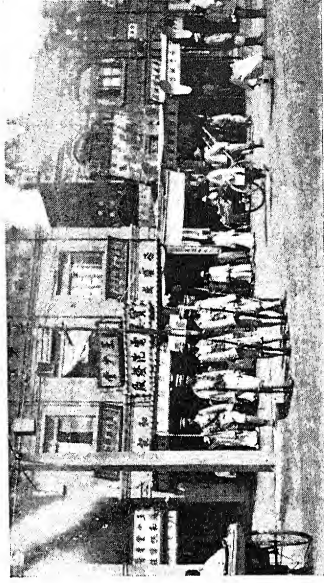
Chinese Right for China,

"WANT THIS WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY."

LIBERTY

Time To Arm! Time For WAR!

Enlargement of one of the notices on American Y.M.C.A.



Armed Chinese police in ex-Russian concession, Tientsin.

CHAPTER VIII

DAYS OF ANXIETY

Barbed wire seemed only natural—My mailbag not reassuring—Peking and Shanghai alarmed—Chinese students terrorise foreigners—British Government in London did nothing and said nothing—French Catholic missionaries behaved the best—Americans the worst—Why interfere with other peoples' religions?—Chinese ethics—Three hundred thousand people demonstrating against foreigners in the South—Russian banners unfurled—Confucius born 2,749 years ago—Worship of God and ancestors—Characteristics of the religion of China—Pressing responsibilities for eldest son—The Press predicts war with everyone—Boycotts on every side—Servants called out—Women and children all sent to safety—China appeared mad—Over-population a serious menace—Dripping heads mounted on poles for all to see—Students educated abroad return with swollen heads—India and China are both lands for the agriculturists.

TO be amongst barbed wire seemed to be quite natural. Beginning with the battlefields of France, I met it again in Egypt in the winter of 1919-20. Again in Syria, Damascus and Sudan in 1921-22; again in China in 1924, returning to it via Siberia in the spring of 1925. Haunted by barbed wire in China we were, in fact.

Conceive the tremendous disillusion of emerging from the horrors of Russia to find in China no peaceful haven as anticipated, but instead a sea heaving with trouble and disturbance.

I came out of the frying-pan (Russia) into the fire (China) blindfolded and knowing nothing. They, the Chinese, plunged out of the frying-pan of Civil War into the fire of Russia blinded and knowing nothing, poor souls.

My Manchurian mail-bag had not been reassuring; followed before I was even unpacked at Star Beach by another wire from a most exalted person in Peking to this effect:

“Recommend postpone visit to Peking.”

A letter from a military gentleman of importance at the British Headquarters at Tientsin said:

“I'm afraid you have chosen a most troublous itinerary, and that your worries are not yet at an end. I cannot conceive a more unfortunate time for you to have returned

to China, when we seem to be brewing up for the biggest disturbance since the Boxer crisis of 1900."

Again, on June 16th, an official wrote from Peking: "We are living on the edge of a volcano here—it may burst out at any moment. To-day there is a long procession waving hundreds of banners and shouting raucous cries—mostly anti-British, I'm sorry to say. The brunt of the dislike has fallen on our shoulders. At the Agricultural College there is a notice in big lettering—'God damn the British and get off this road!' This is not a very good time for you to be knocking about here alone. Like all political events in China, this could not have been foreseen, and you could not have been warned. I'm sorry all the same."

And again, from Shanghai came a wire:

"Better postpone visit."

All this was very disconcerting, seeing that one was still packed for Shanghai and Peking! One was what the schoolboy calls "in the soup." However, Southern Manchuria has many charms and interests—among them the peaceful working of Japanese and Chinese together—and here at any rate, at Dairen, near Port Arthur, one has dropped upon an interlude of calm. So here one must possess one's soul in patience and await further developments, and scribble up impressions of the last few weeks jostling through one's over-tired brain, and a somewhat scratched body.

Yes, all June and July, Chinese students tried to terrorize foreigners and particularly the British and Japanese, egged on by the Soviets. Mr. S—— was now sitting in Peking as Soviet Ambassador.

So severe did the boycott become in the South that business men employed the British Government to help with ships, and land forces for their protection and their trade. Really, standing on Shanghai Bund, and seeing how wonderful that British trade is, or at Hong-Kong on the foreshore (once a mud bank), one cannot blame them. They have built wonderful offices and homes, and made and fostered wonderful trade; to see the wilful destruction of three-quarters of a century of up-building must have been sore indeed. Britishers were being insulted.

The British Government did practically nothing. There was no policy in China under Mr. Ramsay MacDonald,

and not until things had become absolutely desperate did Mr. Baldwin's party move in the spring of 1926.*

Yes, truly these were days of acute anxiety in China ; June, 1925, will always be remembered as a living nightmare. Everyone had friends or relations somewhere, and no one knew what was happening and what fresh disturbance was brewing. People of all nationalities were kidnapped, some were murdered, and any moment the foreigners might have been massacred *en masse*.

With details of politics, which move all too quickly, we are here not concerned, but on all sides we hear of outbreaks and killings. Of steamship services held up at Shanghai. Of mails interrupted and censored, of particular hatred worked up against British and Japanese in Peking. Of riot and intimidation everywhere, while the oil of Moscow began visibly to be poured upon the flames. A strong hand in London at that moment might have saved this dire situation.

And the irony of the situation. The £3 and £4 a day which Moscow and Chita had cost one at those horrid Government hotels—more especially that worse than any convict-prison place at Chita—the luxury tax exacted on everything, even including daring to have hand luggage, and the telegrams which, although paid for, had never arrived, had all gone to help this Soviet propaganda against the world's law and order and further the efforts of Moscow to stir up peaceful lands for their great aim of World Revolution. Alack, I had contributed my mite to an iniquitous cause, and here in China felt its result.

The Chinese missionaries, too, found themselves in a pretty tight corner. Their own followers turned upon them, and in some places stood over them and made them sign declarations of Soviet demands (which they meekly did), just as the Chinese students in Paris locked up their Minister and made him sign a petition at their dictation.

And what are these demands ?

The same silly, too familiar nonsense.

That no one must dare either to save, or to inherit the savings of his ancestors. That all money is public.

That all initiative should be done away with, that the slowest and most unskilled labourer should be paid the same as the skilled and the best.

*The Expeditionary Force left England in February, 1926. How much loss of men, money and prestige might have been saved if Parliament had sent them out nine months before.

That eight hours' "work"—done as slowly and badly as possible, with eyes on the clock—should be the universal rule.

That education and brains are not wanted, that initiative should reap no reward. That, in fact, the minority mob should rule—*vide* Russia—and, my God, if they could only see Russia as I saw it under its terrorism.

One had come East this time prepared to peep into the missionary question a little. My old friend, Dr. Morrison, of Peking, had spoken so warmly of their work. Hence it was with regret that one heard that some also were signing these petitions uncompelled, in other words, proving traitors to their own country. I am neither French nor a Roman Catholic—but all honour to the Catholic Missions in China. At the beginning of the trouble they announced :

"We are a religious body—we have nothing to do with politics and we stand aside." All honour to them. They did.

The Britishers wobbled. Surely the most dignified course would have been to stand aside like the French Catholics. Their business is not political, although in the case of American missionaries it is often commercial. The Americans are clever at money-making, and missionary work gives them opportunities that they are quick to follow up not only in China, but in Syria and elsewhere.

All missionaries in the south had had to take refuge in Treaty Ports.

The Christian Church in China, by the way, is mostly managed by the Chinese themselves, now they are so numerous. But their Christianity rather wavered in the anti-foreign troubles. So it may not be very deep in spite of the labours from outside for over sixty years.

But the Chinese religious problem is not really so complicated as the Indian. China has less outward religion and no religious feuds. In India both are almost unsurmountable. Hindus predominate, and specially hate Mohammedans, who return the hatred with interest, and then there are Mahrattas and Sikhs and Rajputs. In Shanghai there are thirty missionary societies, headed by the British and American Bible Societies. So there is no lack of religious instruction for those who want it, but the "pupils" were not very docile and turned upon their teachers and intimidated them.

Undoubtedly medical missionaries have done vast amount good, when they have taught cleanliness, sanitation and the care of health, but the discussion caused in homes by a smattering of a new and indigestible religion often does an equally vast amount of harm. In fact, I'm afraid missionary work in China has bred discontent, taught beyond capacity, and merely upset the simple childish faith of the natives. People who live in China refuse to employ "new Christians," who, they maintain, are less honest and less reliable, and who have lost their own natural self-respect in assuming a new tone of self-assertion and a new religion which they barely understand. Alas, their enthusiasm often makes them tactless in the extreme. After travelling in a railway carriage with me for some fifteen minutes, a man tackled me with such questions as:

"Marm, have you found Jesus? Is your soul saved?"

Hardly tactful, was it?

As one knocks about the world and sees and hears things one becomes more and more convinced that every land must run its own religion. Religion is born inside. It takes many forms; but religion is there, and each country has evolved its own means of expression—the expression best suited to its national idiosyncrasies, its climate and its circumstances.

To interfere with other people's religion is mistaken zeal.

To recur for a moment to China's own religion and education.

Looking into these Chinese faces—misty with the un-intellectual stamp of little children—one ponders.

They have their ideals, their ethics, their own Buddhist religion—the religion of the poorer classes—and, as in most other lands, their religion is ruled by fear. They have their own philosophy, their great traditions, and, above all these, 90 per cent. of the nation is happy. They progress slowly, 'tis true; but does so-called progression bring happiness? Does it not teach people to be avaricious and grasping, often dishonest (for which has been substituted another word called "cute")? There is much in China that is good, there has been much in China that was great.

Have 300,000 people marching in the South on September 7th, demanding they know not what, brought these

people through "Education" anything but discontent, to be followed by more weariness of soul and disillusion?

In a century or more China may slowly, very slowly, take on Western methods; but will she then be as happy.

She used to be honest. Half-baked new religion has apparently taught her to be dishonest.

She used to work at the arts and crafts superbly—now machinery is turning out rubbish for foreign markets.

China's ancestors were her gods: Confucius, born 2749 years ago, made the people to revere and worship the family. His main teachings were the patriarchal system and ancestor worship. And that every member of a family must help that family. These ideas suited them. Why disturb their belief? What right have we or anyone else to interfere? Modern civilization is filling our lunatic asylums the world over. Well—is that much gain?

In China the family Pedigree Scroll plays a big role. It is tended in lavender. At the new year it is brought from its wrappings and hung on the wall for the first days of the year.

It is a family Treasure, that Pedigree Scroll and Soul-tablet, and so important is "family" that a good Chinaman who goes abroad often arranges an agreement with his employer that if he dies abroad his body must go back to his own land, to lie beside those of his ancestors.

The Soul-tablets represent husband and wife, or grandparents. Further back dates than that go to the Temple; but the modern Soul-tablets are kept on view in the house, and on the great days of worship they are taken to the Temple to be blessed. The same idea of remembrance in a way as our tombstone—a reminder.

The Confucian is a great religion. The religion of perhaps 3 or 400,000 millions of people who look upon their holy man as a great sage and as one equal to God. In every district of China there is a Temple in honour of Confucius, and in each Temple there are two special arches; on one is inscribed four Chinese words, "the virtues of Confucius are equal to Heaven and Earth." The other, also of four Chinese words, says: "the principles of Confucius surpass all others, ancient or modern."

The two-fold worship of God and ancestors is the most distinctive characteristic of the religion of Confucius.

On the eldest son falls great responsibility in China. He

must look after his parents' welfare and health and happiness as soon as he is old enough. When they are dead he must continue his life as they would wish—because their spirits know. He must bring continued peace and happiness to those spirits by an upright life, and must earn success, and honours and money, because all material well-being will make the soul spirits of those who bore him, happy. He must bring up his son in the same spirit of the patriarchal system and ancestor worship.

In China each person has ten souls, by the by, although the more popular idea is confined to three. One remains on earth near his tomb, another wanders round the ancestral tablet, and the third goes to heaven, or enters another body. It would do Europe a vast amount of good if she imbibed a few axioms from China. Interchange of ideas is good for all of us, and for all lands. China may have too much ancestor worship: we have too little; except among those who had no ancestors to be proud of—and buy them on canvas.

Yes, these were stirring times.

The persistent rumour in the English-printed Press that JAPAN WAS PREPARING TO GO TO WAR WITH CHINA, after her behaviour to the Japanese flags and the Japanese Consulates, died down, only to pop up again at Christmas when Japanese soldiers were shipped to Dairen and Mukden to keep order against Chinese disorder. As also did the suggestion that THE HATRED OF ENGLAND HAD BEEN AROUSED BY THE ATTITUDE OF THE AMERICANS.

Then came Lord Birkenhead's remarks, which the papers in huge headlines an inch high declared implied that GREAT BRITAIN WOULD DECLARE WAR ON SOVIET RUSSIA.

Well, well—we lived in days of portent, days full of rumour; for people kept arriving with fresh news from their own particular towns, while firms received cables telling them not to take more orders, or apologizing for the non-arrival of goods. Everything was out of gear; letters took two or three times as long as usual, telegrams could not be accepted at all. Papers arrived late from Peking or Harbin, so that they were from four to six days old when they reached us.

And even my thinnest summer clothes and ALL my

smartest belongings, sent round by sea, could not be got out of the warehouse in Shanghai. They were landed between two boycotts; but there they stayed for four solid months before they could be got out again. How absurd it is that one should mind a little thing like wearing spring clothes in a tropical heat, and an old dress when one has a new one—and yet one does—when the whole of the Far East was ready to rush at its neighbour's throat, and no thin or even thick underwear might ever be required again.

The personal touch is pretty selfish—eh?

Anyhow, so we lived from day to day.

"What's the latest?" was the query.

And one must own the "latest" was never particularly assuring, for although things were better for a moment at the end of June, the flame was soon rekindled, and meantime I moved to Peking.

Foreign women and children at Hong-Kong, Shanghai, or Canton, had been bundled on to a Blue Funnel ship and sent off on a month's round-trip because the servants had all walked out.

"Very sorry, Missie, me must go."

"Why?"

"Me no know why, Missie—me order—me go——"

And go they did.

Civil war in China, which had already started when I reached Peking eighteen months before, in January, 1924, was the outcome of an unruled Republic. Everyone was then discontented. One War Lord after another asserted himself, each in turn to be ruled out. The Central Government in Peking was sterile, and the Southern Government in Canton under Sun Yat Sen was no better. Everyone then grumbled at everyone else. Everyone helped himself as far as he dared, and the soldier was better fed than the coolie. The ground was tilled for any seed, and that seed arrived from Russia.

So get rid of the foreigner, get rid of our late enemies the Japanese who took South Manchuria from us, get rid of the British who are too powerful, and the other foreigners must go.

And what did the Chinese gain. Why, nothing. The students yelled themselves hoarse, the school children went home on their self-claimed holiday, the native banks closed. China's business suffered and millions in gold

were quickly lost. Along the road to bankruptcy she slithered. At the moment China appeared to be mad. National feelings ran so wild that demand for justice and fair treatment took the form of revenge and retaliation, and so-called patriotism reached a pitch of anti-foreignism and boycott. Within ten days of my arrival Russian women were openly preaching communism in Tientsin—and our “green satin lady” was very busy.

China must cure her own cancer.

Her first duty is to learn to govern herself. Until she has some form of unified government she cannot make laws for her own four hundred million human beings, nor can foreign powers negotiate with her.

Evil in China begins with over-population. And yet in Peking the babies arrive so ceaselessly, they are thrown on the dust-cart tied in a bit of matting. Over-supply for demand—want of railways (there are only about 7,000 miles of railway, but these are—or were—extremely good and efficient) more markets, want of stable government. When these come—then, but not till then will China flourish.

One must, of course, remember that life counts for little in China. A couple of decapitated dripping heads may be encountered in a Chinese city, and nothing is thought of it. In Plantagenet and Tudor times we used to exhibit such things on London Bridge; but that was some centuries ago.* While we have moved much in those hundreds of years, China has stood still for nearly as many thousands.

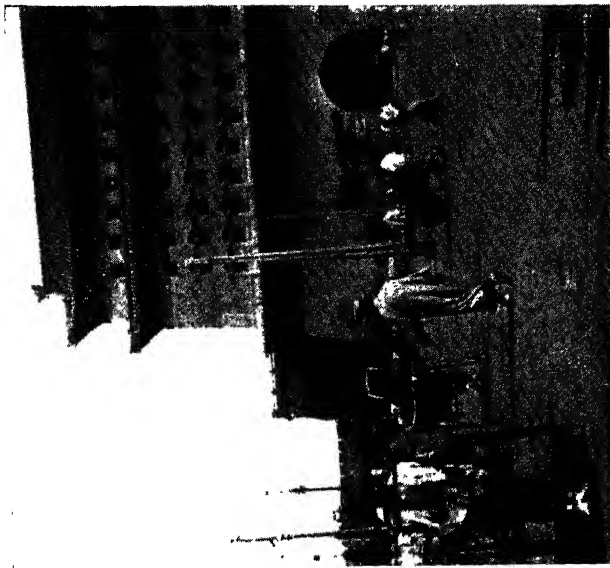
But in sooth it is impossible to boil the broil of China down into a few pages; although, watching it as one did for several months, the idea evolved that China as China was not deeply agitated.

The students who went abroad to finish their education saw great and wonderful progress and prosperity that was unknown in their own land. They saw the modern evolution of centuries. They found London, Paris, New York, or Berlin, gayer places, more smartly dressed, with more creature comforts and intellectual achievements than Fouchow, Canton, Hong-Kong, Shanghai, Peking, or Nanking. It was the same story with travelled Indians, in regard to Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, or Agra. All these peoples learnt to sit on four-legged chairs, use knives, and forks, and felt very modern.

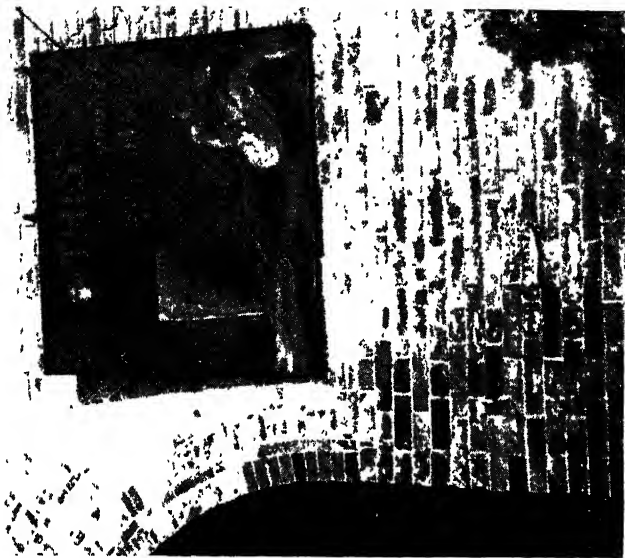
*“The History of Hyde Park.”

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But what neither Chinese nor Indians remembered was the abnormal size of their own land, their enormous and ever-increasing inhabitants ; and that China and India are vast agricultural propositions with vast agricultural populations, and not chiefly cities and city workers, as in other smaller lands with more people to the square yard.



One of the many gates in Peking. " Note the insulting picture on the right. " Is this the way to treat your hosts ? " Taken down after four months, in time for the opening of the Tariff Conference, October, 1925.



Larger view of a gory, dying semi-nude student. Students are never nude in China.

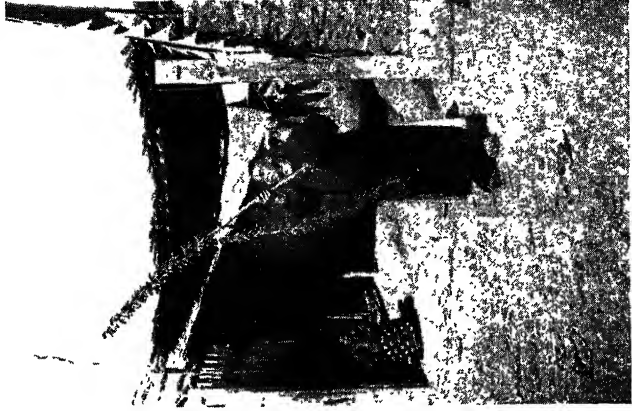
See page 171.



My Amah. We conversed for many months, with five words between us.



This motor car and the servant were made entirely of cardboard, and were burnt at a funeral. (See page 215)



Letting off fireworks at a wedding. (See page 159)

CHAPTER IX

THE CHINA BOY

The China "Boy" smiles—Employed as nursemaids—Childlike and amusing—English the language of the world—Members of Parliament should travel and see things for themselves—We should always uphold our officials abroad—In the East, God grants the sun—Charming people in the United States but her politics often appalling—Mr. Borah fans the flame in China—American-Japan war inevitable—Japan will win—Rickshaws take the place of beds—Hundreds of thousands of them—Street cries—China really loves the foreigners.

CERTAINLY the Oriental smile was a joy to behold after one's spell of Russia. The China boy came smilingly into the room with an early cup of tea.

The China boy cleaned one's boots as if it were a real pleasure to clean them, and brought them back with a smile, showing all his teeth in a well gold-filled mouth. It is the fashion to put golden dollars into one's mouth in China, in spite of it being un-hygienic, but it looks prosperous, of course.

The China boy was all courtesy, and told you the bath was ready as if he had thoroughly enjoyed preparing that spotlessly clean bath, before which was spread a thick, clean BATH MAT, written in bold red British weaving. (A bath in Moscow cost me 7s. 6d.)

A number of Japanese families use Chinese youths as nursemaids, and find them the kindest of attendants for their youthful charges—a striking example again of the good relations between the two races. In South Manchuria the Japanese and Chinese seem great friends, although the land is Chinese and the tenant—for ninety-nine years—is Japanese. But Russia and the United States would prefer to see them enemies. Long may that day be deferred, say I!

There is something childlike and amusing, too, in the dear, smiling, inquisitive Eastern.

He is like an unreadable Sphinx. He likes to know everything. He simply *must* see everything. He or she follows one about. If he dare ask "what for?" he asks; if he dare not ask he listens, and looks. His official rank

in the Bazaars of India depends on the gossip he can bring. In China or Japan he follows from room to room—ostensibly to see if he can help—really, methinks, to see what is doing.

Trade was restricted for months. The amusing part is that they were particularly obliging to their British customers.

English is the language of the world. The Japanese have been quick to realize it; and so the most advanced people of the East—for the Japanese are undoubtedly the most advanced nation east of Suez—have adopted our ugly, but easy, tongue as a sort of second language, and Japan reaches further afield than she generally remembers. She has islands off Australia. The vast portion of South Manchuria that she rents has the great open ports of Dairen and Port Arthur on its sea front. They are to Japan what Singapore is to Great Britain.

In general, the Oriental has adopted English as his own,—"Pidgin English" was born and bred in China and can be learnt in a few hours. It is delightful. Why it was ever called Pidgin English I know not. But the first English settlers in China over a hundred years ago, to wit the East India Company, propounded a simple form of sentence that their No. 1 Boy might understand.

One speaks of people living for years in a country and failing to know it, but in point of fact it is possible to learn a good deal by a short visit—if only carried eagerly through with open eyes.

The more I travel the more convinced I am that every member of Parliament should see something of a country before he begins dictatorially expounding theories that are perfectly ridiculous. The same applies to members of the Labour Party.

Train a man of the right sort, put him in office, trust him, give him a responsible post in a foreign land, and believe me, in a month he will know more of that foreign land than the stay-at-homes do in ten years. What is more, whether he be Consul or Minister or Ambassador, give him a good home to live in and to enable him to uphold his country's position, and give him a salary for himself and another salary earmarked "Entertaining." Let both be adequate. To see a poor man struggling to live on half his pay so as to pay for the education of three children at home is pathetic. He feels he ought to invite

So-and-so ; but So-and-so drinks wine and smokes cigars, and expects to be " well done." The host simply cannot afford that, or if he does afford it, it is, as I know from experience, at the cost of himself and his wife living on an olive and a tomato and boiled water to keep the bills down for the rest of the week. I have peeped behind the scenes and, alas ! know the petty economies that have so often to be made to pay the school bills and entertain travellers. It is not fair.

These men are the props of our Empire, and every Civil Servant should be listened to and firmly supported (or if he fails, dismissed) and adequately supplied for maintaining his position with ease. Our representatives, including those of the Army, Navy and Air Force, are all inadequately paid, especially abroad, at the present rate of living and the ever increasing entertaining expected of them.

Having gone off the rails, let me get back to those dear things at home who talk of " unpaid Eastern labour."

Great Britain is cold and wet and drear. We require warm clothing and fires, and thick boots and nourishing food. We live indoors and want good sanitation.

In the East, God grants the sun. Little or no clothing is required for the greater part of the year, no firing beyond a bit of charcoal in a soup plate for cooking. Boots are hot and heavy and uncomfortable. Nobody wants them. The sun is food and meat, and heating condiments do not suit the climate. Fruit can often be had for the picking. Reed houses or bamboo huts let the cool air through, and sanitation is sanitated by the sun's rays. Therefore the Eastern, with his wild fruits and cheap vegetables, is generally better off than the miner or factory hand in cold hard lands with ten, aye, a hundred times his pay.

The two do not, and never can, compare. Their lives are as different as the colour of their skins. The requirements of one are anathema to the other.

The Chinese coolie is as well off in his land, as the Indian agriculturist in his, or the factory hand in Britain. The person who is really downtrodden, starved, ill-treated, imprisoned without trial, robbed of his earnings, almost afraid to breathe in his overcrowded dwellings, is the Russian in Soviet Russia to-day.

If only mankind could get on to a sort of revolving wheel round the earth's surface and peep at other lands and peoples and their ways, I honestly and truly believe that

every Briton would be more British than ever, and that the jealousy of Russia and some other lands of Britain's solid, stolid success would be increased a thousandfold. Alas, success always brings jealousy.

Whence comes the United States sudden love for the Chinese, his wondrous desire to make friends with them at all costs, because when the American-Japanese war comes, as come it must, and will, he wants the entrée to all the Chinese ports for his ships and men and food? With Vladivostock, Tientsin, Shanghai, Hong-Kong and Canton, the United States would command both sides of the Pacific and Japan would be the chicken inside the sandwich. It suits U.S.A. to be friendly with China and they have played for that end.

But Japan will win.

There are faults on all sides.

Our own silly silence and reticence is a curse. Yankee bounce is a menace.

So as to get rid of the steam, let us take a rickshaw jaunt. It has a soothing effect—anyway on the native.

Rickshaws take the place of beds. When the coolies are not running they are generally slumbering. Chinese fares sleep as the coolie trots them along. Evidently the movement has a somnolent effect, for they loll, or sprawl, or even hang in the most uncomfortable attitudes—asleep. A sleeping Chinese closely resembles a dead person. It is really uncanny. Chinese sleep anywhere and anyhow. Notice a little blue sack on the ground. Go near it, and find a human being curled up into the smallest possible space. It is a Chinese asleep. Arms, legs and hands all seemed tucked away, but it is a man, a real live man who will shake himself awake somehow and go back to his toil. I really believe an Oriental could sleep on his head, and he certainly has the capacity of making himself into such a small ball that it is difficult to believe a grown man is more than a child.

The Chinese coolie always seems to sleep whenever he is not actively employed, and after all his employment is often strenuous.

I cannot bear to go in a rickshaw myself, although it is most comfortable in every way, but it lowers my own self-esteem so deeply that I prefer to walk even in tropical sun, and suffer myself, rather than see that poor human being

puffing and sweating and straining while one sits at ease.

This rickshaw puller toils for a bare existence, and is the human substitute for steam or motor power. In and about Shanghai alone there are some 50,000 of these toilers. In Peking there are 90,000. Yet one must bear in mind that rickshaws are mainly used by the natives themselves, the number of foreigners in China, Japan and Malay being infinitesimal; and these natives love to pile two or three children into the glorified perambulator drawn by one of their own people, to say nothing of large luggage—indeed almost a piano.

With the snow on the ground in Peking, the poor runner is so hot he loosens his coat and shirt and mops his brow with his towel as he pants and sweats in front of his burden, between the two shafts in which he runs. He does not begin his job till he is about fifteen, and often finishes it with consumption at thirty, and his average earnings are very small and so are his tastes. Rice is his chief fare.

Thus do the natives of his own country employ and wear out the rickshaw man. It is a cruel fact.

Still, poor and precarious as his life is, it is at least passed in the open air—and think of the children under ten years who work fifteen hours a day for seven days a week in Hankow and other real Chinese cities for bare food. But that is the Chinese pigeon and must and can only be altered by China herself. These are the native factories. In the foreign ones things are far better.

The rickshaw coolie street cries are delightful. None are more quaint than his sing-song.

We have lots of street cries still in London—coals—newspapers—milk—muffins, etc.—though they are so familiar to us we don't notice them; and doubtless a sandwich man excites as much sympathy in a Chinese woman as a rickshaw coolie does in a British woman.

Money in China is distracting, and the rickshaw boy is the only person who really understands the coins.

It is of different value in different districts. Notes from one town will not be accepted in another. The Mexican dollar is as heavy as an American, which is worth approximately double its value, and there is "big money" and "little money" which sends the foreigner distracted. Silver is called "big money." "Small money" is not silver, 286 coppers, is required to make up a dollar, which

means that 143 copper coins go to the shilling. The intricacies of payment are simply exasperating to the stranger. Those coolies care nothing for the agitation of student mobs. They know foreigners bring money, and they like them, for they want their chow. They don't want boycotts, they want good business and lots of it, and bags full of copper coins.

The *per capita* debt of China is the smallest in the world, viz., 5 dollars on the Chinese individual. The military expenses, on the other hand, have nearly swamped her, in spite of her enormous increase of exports.



The Manchu Emperor of China in exile at Tientsin, July, 1925.
He had left Peking eight months before.



The Manchu Empress of China in exile. Tientsin, July, 1925.

CHAPTER X

TEA WITH THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS

Newly married in 1924—Expelled from Peking a few months later—Republic formed 1911—Greetings continued between Emperor and President—My invitation to tea—Long preambles, much waiting—My escort takes off his spectacles—No one looks directly at the Emperors of Japan or China—We drank tea—We still waited—A Professor fetched me—A sparsely-furnished room—Almost desolation—I still waited—The Manchu Emperor arrived—The matting curtain rattled, and the Empress entered—Both spoke a little English—The tea ceremony—Both very youthful and unsophisticated—All their gorgeous treasures left in Peking—Both want to travel—China loses "face" by not giving these young people a better income—Great ceremonial over my exit—Will that Emperor return to the throne later?—I saw the Imperial Palace in Peking terribly rifled: chests of drawers thrown over, cupboards and trunks ransacked, treasures stolen, windows so filthy one could hardly see through them, the dead chrysanthemums still in the vases—Wonderful Chinese beds—Endless clocks and other mechanical modernity—Miles of passages—Republic—Neglect—Concubines—The Dowager Empress—How the young Emperor left the Palace in a second-class railway carriage with one servant.

MY little tea-party with the Emperor and Empress of China (neither "ex" nor "former"), was quite an interesting and quite a solemn affair. It came about in this wise.

When I was in China before, they had not long been married, and the Emperor's English tutor was away, so that the young couple, living in the so-called "Forbidden City" of Peking—a misnomer, for it was merely "forbidden" as being kept apart for the royal family—were rather more secluded than usual, and my time being limited I did not see them.

This was in the early weeks of 1924, and a few months later they were expelled from Peking, viz., on November 6th.

After the formation of the Republic in 1911 there had been an abdication agreement in 1912, but from then till 1924 the Emperor was allowed to remain in the Imperial City and a certain amount of respect was paid to him.

On feast days and fête days the President sent his good wishes, which were returned, and a state of neutral polite-

ness continued, and for the honour of China should have continued. The Emperor had done no one any harm, and he should have been treated as a gentleman and allowed to live like one.

With one stroke of the pen the little Kingdom in the heart of the Republican capital was pulled down. By the order of the Soviet "Christian" Feng, the Emperor was told to flee. And so went the last representative of the Manchu dynasty whose twelve rulers had occupied the Dragon Throne from 1644 to 1912.

So fearful for the safety of this young man and his wife were the nations of the world, that they sent representations that no harm should come to his person.

I saw him.

Having passed the scrutiny of at least a dozen servants and officials, we were ushered into a sort of anteroom. Here we were well interviewed and re-interviewed. The card of identity was again examined with care, many questions were asked. Handleless cups of clear tea were produced, and one official came after another and looked and talked and went away.

"We don't seem to be expected," I remarked to Mr. Elder, a young Scotsman who acted as my escort, feeling almost exhausted with the intense heat of the day and the long wait.

"Oh, yes, they know all about you, but there is always a great deal of formality to be gone through before one enters the presence of even a high official in China, and this, remember, is Royalty."

Thereupon he took off the pince-nez glasses which he always wore, and folded them away in his pocket.

"Why?"

"Because it would be very bad taste to talk to any exalted person in China and look at them through a pair of glasses.

"But many Chinese wear horn-rimmed spectacles," I murmured.

"That is quite different. A high Chinese may look at me, or you perhaps, through glasses—but to take them off is a necessary courtesy before meeting an important Chinese."

And then I remembered no one may look at the Emperor of Japan, and I had even seen his picture veiled in Tokyo.

We drank tea. We waited. More secretaries or officials or servants came and went, but still we sat ; then fresh tea was brewed and put down beside us. I really felt we were not expected and not wanted. Half an hour must have passed. Then a tall, fine-looking Chinaman, of professional mien, who had been present earlier in the proceedings, returned and explained that His Majesty was ready.

"But I hope I am going to see Her Majesty also," I remarked, with a smile, as I was bid to follow the gentleman alone, while Mr. Elder remained behind.

"Her Majesty? That I cannot say. That rests with His Imperial Majesty himself."

Here was the touch of Royalty.

I walked down the pergola passage, crossed a pretty garden with stone or concrete tables and seats, saw ahead a large but terribly ordinary three-storied house, before every window of which hung matting screens, so that the sun was entirely excluded from the balconies. It was a commodious house, but in no way a palace, neither was the income of His Majesty any longer royal. In fact it was miserably small.

I followed the Professor, who bowed and left me. More servants—more mattings rolled up, and then I found myself in a long, narrow, barely-furnished sort of room. A round table stood at one end ; a green leather sofa was placed behind it. A couple of large, comfortable English green leather armchairs faced the sofa and table, and on one I was asked to sit. Before me were dozens and dozens of music-rolls and a pianola. Otherwise there was really nothing in the room.

It was indeed sparsely furnished. Not a picture. Not an embroidery—not a single piece of bric-à-brac, a bronze, or cloisonné, or carving, or a cabinet—nothing could have been more bare, more unhomelike or less regal. Truly desolation.

I waited alone but a minute. The matting was raised on my right, and in walked a small, thin man, wearing black smoked glasses, alone. For the moment, as he slowly crossed the gaunt room towards me, I wondered if he was the Emperor himself. He looked more than twenty-four, and there was no one to tell me. Then I saw my official friend and another come in behind him, and the matting,

which takes the place of doors, dropped, so I realized that it must be His Imperial Majesty himself.

With an extended hand, he said shyly: "How do you do—I am glad to see you."

Then I made a little curtsy, because I felt it was his due; he was the Manchu Emperor, and it was the least I could do.

He smiled and seemed pleased generally, as he bid me sit again upon the armchair, while he sat upon the sofa. A pause. Neither of us spoke. I began to wish Mr. Elder had been allowed to come in with me; but we had been told that would not be etiquette. I almost wished to run away, it was so terribly still and formal, and the surroundings were so unsympathetic.

A moment later the matting curtain was again pulled back. I heard its rattle. The Emperor rose and with quite a royal wave of his Imperial long thin hand, he said:

"The Empress."

The Empress had come from behind, and with such a noiseless tread that I did not hear her at all, or her attendants until she was actually beside me. Such a dear, tiny little person she was. As she whisked round, her proffered hand was extended with the sweetest smile. I made my little curtsy, asking her (against all the rules of etiquette, of course):

"Does Your Majesty speak English?"

"Yes—a little—I learn——" she said very sweetly.

Another wave of dignity towards her from the young Emperor and she sat on the sofa on his left. It was all most formal, most stiff and solemn, and the sparsity of comfort in the room made it feel even more so. They were both so smiling, however, one felt they meant to be kind, but the lack of language was assuredly a handicap. She looked a perfect child. Her very black hair was divided down the middle, dressed in a bob at the back, and cut in a perfectly straight black fringe to her eyebrows in front. In fact I am not sure the eyebrows had not been shaved, and she certainly had no eyelashes—and yet she was pretty, with the most charming smile.

The first cup—and it was a European cup with a real handle and saucer—with weak, pure green China tea, was placed on the table at the Emperor's right hand; the second cup was solemnly placed beside his Consort, the third one for me, and the fourth for the young Scotsman,

who by this time had been fetched and quickly ingratiated himself with the Royal couple and proved invaluable. He is a fluent Chinese linguist, although, as he speaks English with a slightly Scotch accent, one wondered if the "R" was noticeable in his Chinese.

Whenever he addressed the Emperor I noticed he always stood up; a practice, he explained afterwards, extended to high officials or elderly people in the land of the Dragon.

In speaking to the Empress he always addressed her through the Emperor—another form of etiquette. But this was soon dropped, as the little lady took her own part in the conversation until the English became too intricate, and then she addressed Mr. Elder personally in Chinese, explaining what she wished said to me.

They were both very youthful, unsophisticated and shy. And as one looked at the young man one wondered he was even as grown up as he was, seeing that for eighteen long years he had never left the inside of the Imperial City in Peking, and had known no other world than those four walls circled by a garden about the size of Hyde Park.

His first taste of real freedom had consisted of a journey in a second-class railway carriage, with one attendant, from Peking to Tientsin, when he fled from the city of roofs and tiles a few months before.

The Royal pair had left the wondrous lacquers, and jades, and bronzes, and treasures of their familiar Palace of Peking, the golden cage of loneliness, and now, anyway, had freedom, or part freedom. But there was no palace about this simple house, with its solid English leather furniture, its bare walls and desolation. What a transformation. From luxury, regality and wealth, they had come to such simplicity, and to such (by contrast) poverty.

They can go out now, however, and they do. They have even dined in public at an hotel. And, most wonderful of all, they have stayed on to watch the dancing. Actually to see European men and women in each other's arms, dancing together, and not merely reproduced upon a cinema.

Conversation was difficult because one did not like to touch on their past or present life, or politics; but I did venture to ask him if he would like to come to England some day.

"Yes, very much," he replied in his halting English. "I want go England. I want travel. I want see things."

"And so do I," chirped in the little lady in her far greater English fluency.

"So do I. I want to see everything everywhere." She is a clever, bright little person, this Manchu Empress. She might reign with distinction.

Is it fair for China to leave that young couple in such straitened circumstances. If you turn a man out of his own house you pay him compensation. If, in fact, you take anything—you and I, honourable people—we pay for what we get. On that ground alone those young people should be paid fairly and squarely for what they have lost. Add to that the fact that the Emperor inherited his position and all that position meant, surely due consideration and courtesy should not be withheld by a country which he was born and bred in, and to which he did no wrong. For their own honour and prestige, for the "face" of China, something should be done to give that young couple a decent home and proportionate comfort, otherwise China loses face, and that, to China, is dire disgrace.

All the same wonderful arrangement had to be gone through again on leaving. One man bowed us on to another man, the nice Chinese I called Professor trotted across the garden to escort us back, and by the time we reached the waiting rickshaws at least a dozen men saw us off.

Will the tradition of China be resuscitated? Will this boy living in that very simple home, ever come back to his throne? * One wondered and speculated as one drove away.

The people, the populace of China, understand an Emperor; they certainly do not understand a Republic, guided by Sovietism, nor do they understand revolutions, or care for civil wars.

That boy's return to the Throne might end the turmoil.

*The latest events would seem to answer these questions in the negative. In November, 1928, when the Ministry of Railways was given the task of conveying the remains of Dr. Sun Yat Sen from Peking to Nanking, they set about reconditioning a car which had been used for the great Empress Dowager. It was part of a Royal train which had been held at the disposal of the Imperial Household, and had once been used by the Ex-Emperor Hsuan Tung during his brief reign. An outcry was raised on the ground that it would be irreverent and insulting to the spirit of Dr. Sun to convey his mortal remains in a carriage which had been tainted by being used by Imperial personages. The Ministry therefore had to make other arrangements.

Plato said: "Democracy is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, which dispenses equality alike to equals and unequals."

That might have been said to-day of China.

Some weeks later I saw over the Imperial Palace in Peking, vacated only a few months before for the first time by this young Emperor and his consort. How I got there is such an amusing story it must be kept to another chapter; what I saw there finds a place here.

One passes down miles, literally miles, of open passages from hall to hall, from temple to temple, from library to audience chamber, for the Imperial City is a vast place full—or once was full—of priceless treasures.

Emperors, kings and monks left us most of the beautiful work the world contains. They fostered the arts, encouraged learning and to them—and to them indeed—the world owes untold homage. The Imperial City in Peking was no exception to this rule.

One courtyard after another is passed; and strange to relate, although the two side houses making the square are shut up at the backs, the two more important middle houses are invariably transparent. They can be peered into before and behind. There seems no privacy about them, but in such places these royal folk lived for centuries. More than that, these important houses are usually composed of two rooms only, and the occupants had to go outside on to a balcony to communicate with the other houses—a most uncomfortable arrangement.

Here is a square in which the famous Dowager Empress spent her winter days, removing to the Summer Palace for the great heat. Her rooms must have been horribly cold. They are only one story high, with deep roofs covering small balconies which run right round her suite. These little houses are generally divided by screens into two or sometimes three rooms. The big centre one was the Audience Chamber or chief sitting-room, with its throne-like, yellow-satinéd wide seat on which Royalty sat with dignity facing the door. Curtained, or heavily screened off on either side, came a bedroom at one end and perchance a sitting-room at the other. But courtyards had to be crossed to dining-rooms or other sets of apartments, which sounds chilly in a land where the thermometer for several months stands round about zero. Where also central heating was unknown, and even electric light did

not seem over-abundant and was universally projected from the commonest, vilest-looking candelabra such as one would expect to find in a cheap modern lodging-house.

Chinese beds are set into the walls in cupboard-like fashion as in Normandy to-day. They are springless, covered with mattresses, and below are several deep drawers in which blankets and eider-downs are hidden during the daytime. The Royal House of China appears to have lived in bed-sitting rooms, in fact, for all the rooms are adjustable in this way.

The more modern young Emperor had European beds of white wood. His centre hall was, as usual, the Audience Chamber. He and his Empress had a bedroom on the right, with half modern furniture and half ancient Chinese ; and on the left in the alcove, deeply hung with curtains like a Chinese bed, was his up-to-date bathroom, the only one in the palace.

A couple of yellow satin palanquins with tiny windows (and no air) stood on a balcony, the very palanquins in which the Emperor and Empress a year before had gone to the Great Temple of Confucius for the sacrifice. That was the Emperor's last great public appearance. An Emperor whose entourage numbered some ten thousand souls.

There were some hideous modern chairs and tables ; but the cloisonné and jade ornaments, the dragons in coral the size of large rats, the bits of crackle china would have been wonderful if one could only have seen them through the absolutely filthy windows.

One's heart ached. To think of that young couple in Tientsin living in a common little house without even an ornament or bit of embroidery, while this Palace. . . . And yet the Palace was a cruelly restricted golden cage, in which tradition barely let them breathe, and in Tientsin they can go out like ordinary people and, as said, even feed in public at an hotel, and watch the dancing.

But the great Temple, on which clamber the royal gold-lacquered dragons by the yard, like teapot handles crawling along the top roof, is marvellous. They must be ten or fifteen feet long—perhaps more ; one cannot judge so high up—but the yellow-gold of the tiles under the gleams of an autumn sun make that roof a marvel among the roofs of the world. Inside the church-like shrine itself are strange pagodas, from one foot high to ten, all covered with dust and a sad sight of neglect and

ancient glory. Inside, the roof is supported by dragons, as gargoyles support roofs or battlements from outside, supplying water exits at the same time, in our own lands ; in both cases dragons and gargoyles played their part in mythology. These imperial dragons on the roof, inside the roof, and on every place and corner, always carved by hand even to the brass upon the Imperial red doors, are things to be remembered.

Dirt-begrimed, dust-covered was everything—a mockery of Imperial grandeur left to Republican neglect. Open chests with the drawers thrown out were piled up anyhow in haste. The floors were strewn with paper and cigarette ends, and at different parts of the Palace stood empty tin boxes, veritably rifled. Yes, rifled—and by whom ?

And down those miles of passages we wandered, footsore and weary, for hours. One courtyard led to another courtyard, one collection of bronze vases or storks and dragons led to more vases or storks or dragons.

Here romance and tragedy had lived. Here two thousand eunuchs had worked, for only one real man slept in the Palace o' nights. All the servants were eunuchs, whether secretaries, doctors, priests, waiters, writers, cooks or gardeners. Most of them are starving to-day. And here in olden days great Emperors had had a hundred or even two hundred concubines. That practice passed away long since. The present young man has one wife and one concubine. The late great lady, the Dowager Empress, was a favourite concubine and bore a son, but that son could not reign ; no direct descent was possible in China.

The concubine system was as strange as it was ancient. Every night the Emperors of yore were handed a tray and on that tray were ivory slips that looked like long counters. On the slips were the names of the ladies of his household. He picked out one, and off went the eunuch to find the lady and order the bath of purification. She was later carried shoulder high by two eunuchs and deposited in her silken robe in the Emperor's room. . . . Solemnly the Emperor was asked if she was to be beaten. Sometimes he said yes, and sometimes no. The no meant that he did not mind her bearing him a child. And all this from Bible days and long before.

In the next square or compound to where the young Emperor and his Empress lived was the house of his concubine, very similar in style, and in another compound

the house where he did his studies with his English tutor. The books and copy-books are still on the table. Even a pot of clay stands upon the writing-table just as it was left.

It was November when they took flight. November is chrysanthemum time, and countless pots were evidently full of growing chrysanthemums and asters. There they stand to-day in dozens, the flowers dead and brown, the earth like yellow sand, the pots begrimed with dust. There they stand, the flower vases the boy Emperor and his wife gazed at for the last time in November, 1924. He had never left the Imperial City before that day—will he ever return to it?

The whole place is clock-ridden. There must be hundreds of clocks. Good, bad and indifferent, great and small; but clocks, clocks, clocks, until one felt it was a clock shop. Orientals love clocks and glass balls, like children's coloured bladder balloons; one finds them all over the Middle East and India, and here again one finds them galore in China.

Several cottage pianos and pianolas and a sort of hurdy-gurdy-handled-band are scattered about in various rooms, and also telephones, but no one could say the rooms are comfortable. The seats are hard and severe. Half are for sitting cross-legged, half are chairs; but big, comfortable, modern armchairs do not exist, although one or two atrocious *suites* of the vilest modern furniture are there as a disgrace to modern taste. Some of the floors are covered with linoleum such as we put in kitchens for utility, and even some of the marvellously carved tables have their polished tops plastered with modern linoleum. There are not many such eyesores, but these were the modern inventions foisted on to this poor young man, probably at enormous cost.

There was a dining-room which beggars description for its vile modern taste: an English workman's cottage would put it to shame. It is a "suite" (Heaven destroy all suites), and its brocade and woodwork are an eyesore, among so much that is beautiful. Sandwiched in between these strange anomalies were wondrous works of ancient Chinese art. They were all big. The smaller ones appear to have been carted away in spite of large and wondrous paper seals plastered by the military Governor (the Christian humbug, Soviet Feng) on every door and window.

One must remember that though the Manchu dynasty fell with the famous old Empress Dowager, the young Emperor was at first allowed to remain in his palace, and could still walk about its extensive grounds filled with the treasures collected through the centuries. And these compounds contain endless bronze storks, tortoises, enormous vases six and eight feet across, urns, incense burners, pots for sacrifice, some of superb workmanship and all standing large and imposing but exposed to the elements.

There seems little doubt that the Imperial Palace was rifled. The signs are everywhere; and a story tells of two hundred camels waiting outside when Feng's soldiers entered and of these camels waddling off towards Mongolia later. But as one can believe only half of what one hears in China, that may be merely a report. Anyway, it is quite certain that much of a smaller and more movable nature is in curiosity shops to-day, where my friends were buying it, and I longed for the cash to do the same. There it is recognized as part of the palace property by those who knew the palace well. Who moved the things?

Certainly not the poor young Emperor, who left on one hour's notice and is living without a pot or a pan, an embroidery or an enamel with which his whole life had been associated. And if the authorities don't do better than they have done in the first year, much will fall into actual decay; for only wine and certain cheeses improve by keeping, certainly not palaces or women.

It was difficult to learn exactly how the Manchu Emperor left his palace, but apparently it was this wise. The Christian General, being in possession of Peking, determined to oust the Emperor and have a look round his palaces and possessions.

The Emperor and Empress were at luncheon. A message came that someone wanted to see him.

"Tell him I am engaged and lunching with the Empress."

"He cannot wait."

"He must wait."

And almost before the Emperor had said the words, a General of Feng's army was in the room.

"You must leave here in an hour," he ordered.

"Leave here?"

"Yes, leave the Imperial City within an hour. These are the orders of General Feng."

The young couple had only time to collect a few necessities such as one might require for a week end and thereupon fled. They went, as said, to the house of the Emperor's father near by. It will be remembered that the direct male descendant never succeeded to the throne of China; it was always a collateral descendant. They remained at Prince Chun's house for a time, and personal clothing and blankets and eiderdowns were taken to them by the resident servants, who were not all cleared out of the palace for about three days. Some three thousand dependants, including a thousand eunuchs, all had to leave. During that time the Christian General's soldiers were in command and had a look round, even to the humbler quarters apparently, for peeping through the windows one views a sad state of things. Open drawers with all their contents tumbled on the floor, writing tables rifled, cupboards emptied and open or full of dirty paper. In fact, most of the rooms look as if they had been ransacked by thieves and left in disorder and haste after the valuables had been removed. That Imperial City is a mournful sight: its glory gone, its proud roofs still standing, its large and wondrous treasures still there, but all the smaller and more movable things gone—some to the pawn-shops, the curio dealers, the haunts of thieves.

Four months went by and again the Emperor had to fly, alone but for one servant—in a second class railway carriage.

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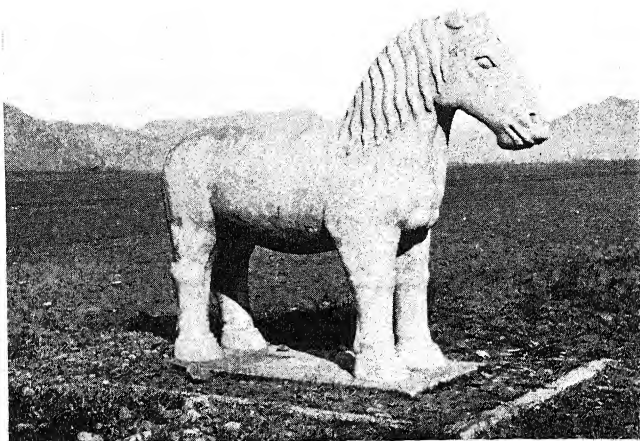
Peking water-seller, whose squeaking barrow is reminiscent of the creaking water wheels of Egypt.



A family jaunt. Four on a wheelbarrow.



The way everyone has to travel in the interior of roadless China.



Stone beasts in the Animal Avenue at the Ming Tombs, North China.
(See page 194.)

CHAPTER XI

WHO IS CHINA—WHAT IS CHINA?

Evasive and elusive—People cannot say No—A visit to the Acting President—The procrastination before I got there—A ridiculous hoax—Officers wives learning to read—Chinese ideographs have ten thousand characters—"The Foreign Office had written to the Home Office, etc."—The Christian General: a Russian pawn: he marches his soldiers to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers"—A letter marked *Urgent*—How I was sent from pillar to post—My Amah and her quaint ways—Friends for many months, without a mutual language.

FOREIGNERS were prepared to give more power to China. But, who is China?
What is China?

Naturally I wanted to see who China really was, and who represented China. She is certainly not an entity to-day. She is nothing and nobody concrete, and no power or permit of interference in a well-run business can be given to any odd man in the street. Negotiations require signatures, and no one has the authority to sign for China. That is, and has been the rub. No one is responsible.

Funny little side-lights throw illumination upon the characteristics of a people. The workings of the Oriental mind are as intricate as a Chinese puzzle.

A well-known man—a diplomat in Peking—said to me:

"My experience of China has brought me to believe about one-third of what I am told either in Chinese or a foreign language. It is a land of rumour and exaggeration."

"May I suggest," I chirped in, "that 'evasive and elusive' would be suitable terms for China?"

He laughed.

"You are about right," he said. "They never dare say No. They positively funk it. They will promise the moon rather than say NO in a manly, upright honest fashion, and then will invent any fabrication to put off the final negative."

Exactly what I found. So now let me tell you a funny little story of Chinese mentality.

When I was leaving the acting President after a long

and pleasant chat, the Chief Executive said, as he showed me into the fine car he had sent for me: "If there is anything I can do for you, please let me know."

"Thank you very much, your Excellency. I wonder if I might be allowed to see the old home of the Emperor, the home where he really lived with the Empress, and make a sketch of the outside?"

"Certainly," he replied. And, turning to my escort, he told him to arrange it with the head of the police.

I thanked him profusely, feeling it would be interesting to view the old house of State with its wondrous treasures, after seeing the humble home in which the Manchu Emperor lives in exile. The place was described in the last chapter you may remember, so now I am going to tell you how I got there.

That was Monday.

Tuesday arrived. I had asked for Tuesday afternoon if possible, as my days were rather full, and, after several months in Peking, were numbered.

Half an hour at the telephone, and it was announced that the "Foreign Office was in communication with the Home Office," but that nothing had yet been arranged.

"To-morrow I am engaged," I said, "so could it be Thursday or Friday afternoon?" The usual evasive, elusive answer. Everything would be done. "The Foreign Office was in communication with the Home Office," etc.

Wednesday—no news.

Thursday I rang up again. Same answer. "The Foreign Office was in communication with the Home Office, and the Home Office had not yet given its reply."

Friday morning early. An *urgent* note arrived to tell me to be ready at nine o'clock, when I should be fetched. At nine I was at the door and was bowled away in a handsome car, with a high official and a couple of men-servants, in great state and much fuss, to the Forbidden City to see the Emperor's old home. Naturally I was delighted. This was a lucky chance and the fulfilment of a wish to see something everyone did not see.

We went to one of the five red entrances. A guard of soldiers saluted us and an officer all over red tabs stepped forward. Such a nice, smiling, upstanding man. "His General had intended to be present to do the lady all honour," he said, "but unfortunately he had been pre-

vented, and so had sent his Chief of Staff to show the lady *everything*."

Splendid. Victory at last.

We proceeded. A dozen soldiers followed. They were mostly boys of seventeen. We walked a little way.

Pointing to a tree, quite a modern sort of tree but solidly walled in :

"That is the tree where the last of the Ming Emperors, about 1640, hanged himself. Nearly three hundred years ago, and a devoted eunuch hanged himself beside him."

Gruesome, but not particularly interesting to me. More especially as the walled-in tree looks less than a hundred years old.

Uphill we slithered, for it had rained as usual, until we came to a kiosk.

"But did the Emperor live up this hill?" I asked.

"This is Coal Hill."

"Coal Hill? But I've been to Coal Hill before. In fact, the other night at the Feast of the Lanterns I walked from the Lake up part of Coal Hill. I must have gone up the other side."

"Really——"

"But where did the Emperor *live*?" I persisted.

"This order for Coal Hill is a great honour. It is out of hours. The General has sent his Chief of Staff to greet you, and arranged a parade to please you."

"But the Emperor's house?" I stuttered.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has written to the Home Office and the Home office has the matter in hand," he calmly replied, seeing nothing funny in the prevarication.

I felt almost hysterical by now. Anyone possessed of a few cents could go to the Coal Hill part of the old Forbidden City. It had been thrown open to the public since 1911—merely a sort of Hampstead Heath in a corner of a vast park. However, the Chief of Staff had now been joined by half a dozen more red tabs. The soldiers had been augmented till they now numbered almost forty.

We climbed to the top. We looked at the wondrous roofs I had so longed to paint for weeks and weeks and had already managed to sketch from the Peking Hotel of the Forbidden City below; then, without all these officers and soldiers appearing to see the humour of the situation, we slithered down again.

Another gentleman who spoke good English joined us below. He was Head Teacher of the Cadet College. He was a pleasant man, but not of the Emperor's palace, which I thought I had come forth to see; nor had he even anything to do with it, but he would "show me the school for officers' daughters and wives." Naturally I agreed, although at the moment it flashed through my mind that it was strange for married women to be going to school.

We saw it—two small rooms flanking a courtyard and ten or twelve young women, divided between a man teacher in one room and a woman teacher in the other. The girls were all learning to read Chinese, and their ages were fifteen to twenty-five. Chinese, it must be remembered, is a complicated affair. Chinese has, as mentioned, 249 ideographic characters and 10,000 ordinary characters. All these must be known by really literate people. These poor little daughters and wives of the officers of Feng's Christian army were learning to read that day, just to read a simple book, and they looked pretty harassed over the job. Fancy the wives of European officers learning to read.

Perchance they were struggling with the simplified new scheme for teaching coolies to read on "the one thousand school character plan." There is undoubtedly an attempt to open more and more schools. The blot being that the new schools are controlled by the scholars instead of the teachers.

Then we went on to the drill ground. Here were more officers and upstanding cadets, who paraded and drilled for my benefit; but my real interest lay in drawing a broadsword at least three inches wide, lying among dozens on the grass, from its leather sheath—not really a sword, but an implement for beheading, still used in Chinese war along with the umbrella and the fan. It was heavy, and yet is carried daily by battalions of Feng's youthful soldiers marching through the streets of Peking. Finally many salutes and handshakes and official good-byes, and off we drove from the dark red gates through which we had entered. It was very kind of someone to have gone to so much trouble; but really, when one wants a hat, a pair of boots does not take its place. I explained that gently on the way home.

"The Foreign Office has written to the Home Office,

etc.," reiterated the Foreign Office gentleman who had motored me out.

"My time is drawing to a close," I persisted. "I have been several months in Peking. I understand the difficulty of going to Kalgan or Urga in Mongolia, or up the Yangtse, in the south, and so have spent more time in Peking, but I am sorry—"

"The Foreign Office has——"

Collapse of poor me—and it was the fifth day.

As we drove away, one noticed that on the outside wall of the barracks are large whitewashed squares, several feet across, and on these the Christian General has texts and proverbs for his soldiers.

"Honesty is the best policy."

"Keep straight."

"A stitch in time saves nine." "It never rains——"

But very few of the coolie or soldier class can read, so the texts may not be as useful as Mr. Feng would wish. Yet two months later he was in full possession of Peking.

Apart from Mr. Feng's hypocrisy, China is nevertheless in many ways very like Palestine in the old Bible days. For the corn and maize are still ground by an ox or a woman pulling the big stone round. They are thrashed with a flail in the open, and any windy day one can see a wide-mouthed basket tossed to throw the grain into the air, so that the wind may blow the chaff from the corn. Little replicas of Joseph, Mary, the Child and the ass are constantly to be met with on the roadside. That is the dear, sleepy, contented life of the countryside of China. Perhaps that is why Feng so loudly and incessantly proclaims himself a Christian.

Next morning at ten another large envelope was handed in from the British Legation marked *URGENT*.

It contained a letter from the *Chargé d'Affaires* to say the enclosed had just come to the Legation, giving me permission to paint that day and the following day, from nine to five, at the Forbidden City.

The envelope enclosed was ten inches by five. It was all decorated with red bands and seals with black writing, and inside it contained two fully covered pages with wide red lines and many characters of faultless calligraphy.

Patience brings reward even in China. All comes to him who knows how to wait. I had waited. Here it was.

Here was victory. The Foreign Office *had* fixed up the Home Office and all the other offices at last. There was not a moment to spare. It was already ten o'clock.

Seizing campstool and paints, rushing downstairs, I ordered a rickshaw and, fearing any muddle with the letter and the language, called for an English-speaking guide. He got a rickshaw. I gave him the letter and, almost breathless, off we started to see the Emperor's old home in all its glory and magnificence at last. Through the perspiring, yelling rickshaw coolie crowd we ran jog-trot, past these modern, incongruous trams in old Peking. On we sped. Another large gateway. Much talk between the guide and the soldier guard, whose stripes and bars and regimental numbers were all pinned on with safety pins, till they looked like a pincushion, and with great ado my rickshaw was allowed to enter the sacred portals.

It was quiet here, away from the hubbub of the streets, and we could talk.

"This is the Winter Palace, is it not?" I remarked to the guide.

"Yes."

"I thought I remembered this part. I was here in the snow last year." We looked about. We landed at the third palace, peeped at the Museum, and then I demanded:

"Where did the Emperor actually live?"

"Oh, he didn't live here at all."

"Didn't live here? But I have come to see where he did live. All these letters and papers are my permit."

"They are a 'special permit,' lady, for the Winter Palace, *to let you come in without payment and not be bothered while you paint.*"

Checkmated.

I really did not know whether to laugh or to cry. I had "officially" been brought back to a place I already knew. I had "officially" been given free entrance, had gone to the expense of a guide and his rickshaw, and had I come alone I could have got in for one shilling, or twenty-five American cents!

Another form of Chinese elusive evasion done with prodigious pomp. It was all too funny. How does anyone ever do any real business with such people?

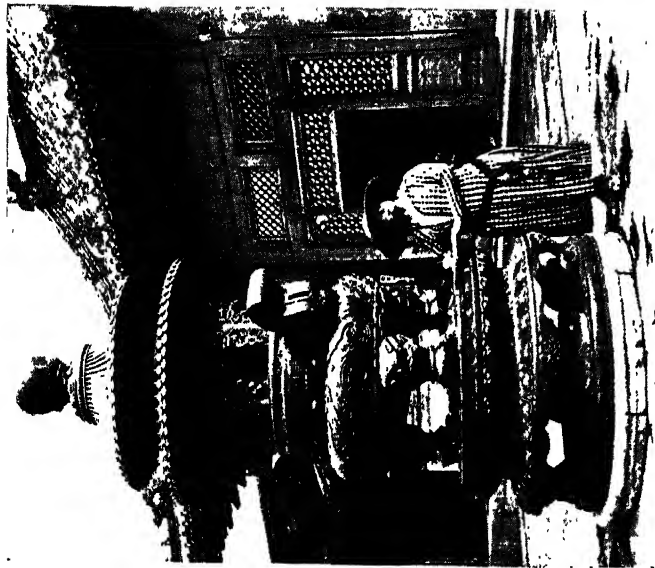
"Don't you think that, with those two official papers and that fine large envelope, we could go to where the Emperor really did live and try to get in?"



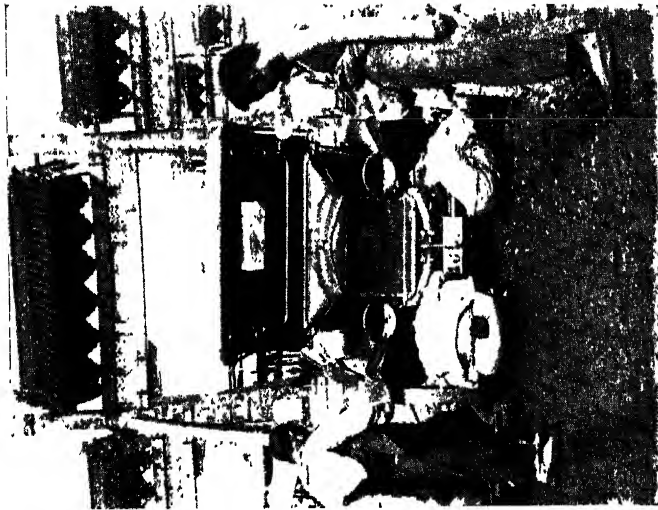
A priest (on left) with his cricket in a wire cage. Servant on right.



(See page 109)
One of the staff officers of the "Christian" General Feng, *inside* the Imperial City, after the young Emperor had been sent away (November, 1924)



(See page 153.)
 Mrs. Alec-Tweedie sketching at the Bronze
 Incense Burner, Lhama Temple, Peking.



Ancient and Modern China.
 Youthful mechanics mending Mr. Newman's
 car.

"We might try," he glibly replied.

Accordingly we jogged out again, and along various roads (always within the original Forbidden City, which is now public), and found ourselves at the gate exactly opposite the gate we had entered with the Chief of Staff to the Coal Hill hoax the day before.

Much talkee-talkie—more pincushioned guard—display of letters. That letter, by the by, must have taken one solid hour or more to write, it was so beautiful, and must have been done by one of the Chinese official "writers." But no. More talkee-talkie. Absolutely impossible without an order from General Feng at Kalgan.

The President of China had no power to give any order for anyone to go anywhere. It rested with General Feng, who had painted up the texts, and lived nearly 100 miles away.

Then came the cream of the situation, then it was vouchsafed that at one o'clock that day, on payment of one dollar, anyone could see the Emperor's Palace. It was to be open to the public that afternoon.

For one Mexican dollar (two shillings), without that letter or that guide and his rickshaw, I could march in after one o'clock.

Funny—eh? Well, one just laughed.

Beaten. Baulked in that truly Oriental, polite, bowing gracious way of the Oriental. It turned out the Chief Executive and the Foreign Office and the Home Office actually did *not* know that the Royal Palace was to be so shortly open to the public by a warring General; and so I went thither again and again, paid my dollars and pondered much.

A Chinaman cannot say No. He will resort to any polite subterfuge, but he cannot say Yes or No.

Moral—for every silly little story has a moral: If an order from the President of China is obeyed in such fashion, how can the Chief Executive rule China?

The President of China forbade opium smoking, and it had about as much effect as the President of the United States forbidding strong drink. No one paid any attention.

Several had already tried to be President of China and one and all had failed.*

*In October, 1928, seventeen years after the fall of the Manchu Dynasty, a new Government arose, and Chiang-Kai-Shek was elected President. Does this, after seventeen years, foreshadow more peaceful days for China?

But to switch back a little.

In Peking an amah had awaited me.

After travel—and travail—of heat and dirt, and discomfort, of constant packing and unpacking, of writing and painting, to find someone to wash gloves and other things, to mend and sew buttons and look after ribbons, to wash flower-vases (for I must have flowers or life is barren), to do the hundred and one little things I had been doing alone for hectic months, was joy.

Amah couldn't speak one word of English. I couldn't speak one word of Chinese.

Deadlock? Not a bit of it. We became fast friends.

I smiled and she smiled. I patted what I wanted taken down, and having grasped my meaning, Amah patted the thing and took it down.

I showed her how I liked things hung up in the wardrobe. She hung them up all in rows.

I pointed to a drawer and put in one hat. Amah unpacked the hat-box and deposited the lot in the drawer all tidy and in order. And when Amah had nothing particular to do she always came and stood opposite me and said: "Washee-washee."

That meant to say she was ready. She must, in fact, wash something—and if there was nothing particular to wash, she scrubbed at large every mortal thing from hair-brushes to pens, paint box and brushes, from boot-bags to sponges. And still she said: "Washee-washee."

She looked so longingly at me that I felt almost inclined to say: "As there is nothing left you must wash Missie!"

Her feet had been bound. She wore black cloth shoes, made, of course, by herself, as Chinese women each and all make the family footwear at about ninepence a pair. They pride themselves on their slipper-making. She had white stockings, which were really putties, white cotton trousers caught tight at the ankle and a long white coat. Her hair, in a bun, was ornamented with imitation jade pins from Birmingham, and needles in use with cottons attached. She always carried a fan. High and low, both Chinese and Japanese, carry fans—not only the women, but every man of every age, for they feel the great heat intensely.

She was indeed a pearl beyond price, the dear, kindly old thing. She simply adored a sugared cake or marmalade on toast—chow-chow to her was heaven-sent if it was

European chow-chow. She smacked her lips literally, and almost winked at me as she squatted on the floor and gobbled it up.

To sew, she sat on my little painting camp-stool. She loved it, and the top of the hat-box was her table, while her thimble was a sort of ring half an inch wide, worn half-way up her finger, and topless.

Amah had been for years with a lady friend at the British Legation. The lady was at home, and so this acceptable help dropped into my arms, so to speak, and with a room at 95° I struggled to write and collect my melting thoughts while dear old Amah kept me clean and tidy.

Yet "washee-washee" and sew-sew" were our only words in common. The rest was dumb-show or telepathy, and she was intelligent.

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CHAPTER XII

PEELING PEKING

Georgous yellow Royal tiles—Wonderful streets—Herds of black pigs—The Peking cart—A barrow-load of humanity—Sing-songs—Beggars; cripples; blind; deformities and poor—Wooden wells—Thousands of camels: really dromedaries from Mongolia—A Chinaman's description of students—Peking water carts—A kitchen swinging across the shoulders—The correctness of the Chinese weather calendar—Tropical rains *versus* snow and ice—Nine inches of rain falls in twenty-four hours—The streets a flood—Roofs washed in—Heat unbearable—Fifteen inches of rain in eight days—Even Confucian temple is washed into holes—Great Britain has best climate in the world—One struggles, damp oneself with damp clothes—Everything damp—Great holidays of China—The First Moon—Foreigners—Beautiful old temples—A sequestered priest—Still great Chinese scholars—China same size as Europe—The peasants happy and employed—Agriculture for all—Peking overcrowded—Chinese men's dinner parties—Sing-song girls—Strange fare at meal times—Chinese women practically ignored—Sing-song girls sold as veritable slaves when quite children—China has stood still for 500 years.

ONE knows the charm of peeling bells; but here was peeling Peking. Yes, Peking literally peeled. Great lumps of beautiful pink plaster slithered off the walls. The gorgeous yellow-tiled roofs slid from their place, everything that could peel or slither, or slide or glide did so. One felt that a few years more of summer rains, and there would be no Peking left. It was nobody's job to re-plaster or mend. The work of centuries is left to slide or decay. It is nobody's buisness. Nobody cares, and so, day by day and week by week, one quietly and sadly watches the yearly ravages of Peeling Peking in the passing.

Peking is just as strange a mix-up as its politics.

If only the great towns of Europe could take a peep for one hour at the chief street of Peking—the sort of Regent Street, Champs Elysées, Fifth Avenue, State Street, Unter den Linden, Prado—any great city the world over, in fact—and compare it with Peking, it would take them just one hour to see that East and West are poles asunder, and the West cannot and never will be grafted on the East. A few educated men and women are not a nation. They are not



After 15 inches of rain in eight days in Peking.



See page 222



Four typical roads near Peking.



A promising youth.



Pony being shod outside "Tattersalls,"
Peking.



Twelve men pulling a train of timber logs 80 yards long. It took them three weeks.
There was no other way. (See page 269)

even representative of a nation, so just let us put them on one side and look at the chief street of Peking.

You see that herd of black pigs ; small black pigs come into town in tens or twenties or thirties to the slaughter-house, and dozens of such herds enter the city gates and walk through the chief streets daily.

You see that little go-cart being trundled by that trousered Chinese woman, with pleasant, cheery smile—well, look inside the modern go-cart. Lo ! a totally naked little boy of about four or five years. And that straw hat lined with pale blue, with black tassels hanging from the wide brim, covers an almost nude coolie, from the country ; in town to sell his wares.

That barrow-load of four humans on one wheel and as many more sacks, which squeaks as musically as the wells of Egypt, is just a party out on business bent.

You see those two four-feet-square boxes hanging on either end of a pole ; but you can't see the man who is trotting along with them—only his shaved head is visible above his enormous packages. They are not heavy, they are only cigarettes ; but the next coolie has three heavy armchairs mounted right up on his head. He is a furniture remover, and the weights, sometimes running up to eighty pounds, these men carry at the trot-trot is surprising.

Just to stand at a street corner and watch is exhilarating. There are wondrously few accidents, but you see many hair-breadth escapes. The good nature of the people is noticeable. They crack their own little jokes with one another as they pass, and sing songs.

Oh yes, there are beggars, and cripples, and blind, and deformities and poor ; but there are not as many of these in Peking as there are in another capital city—to wit, Moscow. Peking owns its poverty, Moscow boasts its riches.

Look again at that strange wooden well. Only some streets have water laid on, the rest fetch it from the well. You wonder at the minute size of the donkeys. They compare badly with those of Egypt and Palestine ; but they carry heavy loads and often their master sits on the top of the lot, and there—oh yes—there are the camels (really dromedaries), twenty or more of them, bringing in coke. One may see hundreds, yes, hundreds of them any winter day in Peking.

The street swarms with humanity, of which not ten

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per cent. can read or write. In winter they wear cotton-wool, or fur suit piled on fur suit ; in summer the men are stripped to the waist—and through all that hubbub forge the ceaseless rickshaw and the occasional motor-car. There are some pretty awful motor horns and hooters in Paris, but if you want shrieks and spasms try Peking. At night they are hideous.

The side lights of travel are generally interesting.

I had been painting with a nice old guide man who knew some English, but the heat, the glare, and the wasps had been too much, so in despair I shut up shop and waited for the return of the kind friend who had deposited me from his motor for two hours and would fetch me again.

Thus I sat on the little camp-stool and talked. A pack of students passed. The eyes of the old guide followed them.

"No likee school-men," he said. "School-men makee troubles many. Better play footballs school-men."

It was a strange remark, because at the very time a big student demonstration was going on I saw a lot of Chinese opposite the Peking hotel playing football.

One day at a Temple a bevy of students followed us in. They had taken the opportunity on seeing the door open. They seemed much interested at first, then laughed, and seemed to make fun of something and departed.

The old custodian shook his head and said to my Chinese friend :

"Soldiers and students no good.

"Soldiers can't look after the students.

"Government can't look after soldiers.

"Good people to-day have no people look after them.

"Bad—Bad—Bad days China."

In Peking a man waters the streets with a big wooden ladle. It sounds absurd, but it is most efficacious, and practice has made him so expert that he gets along quite rapidly. Two men carry the heavy tub swinging on a pole between them. Every twenty yards or so they halt right in the middle of the road. They dump the tub and seize the ladles, swishing the water on either side. Finished, they pick up the tub and trot further.

There are two real water-carts, with real sprinklers behind, now in Peking, but they are looked upon with

grave suspicion. The populace hate them. Resent them. Think them the invention of the devil. Why? Because hundreds, almost thousands, of Chinese get their daily bread by watering the roads with wooden spoons.

In Batavia in Java I remember the men had large water-cans, with long spouts and roses at the ends, hanging under their arms by a cord round the neck, and as they jog-trotted the water came out of the spouts and watered the streets. Equally primitive, but efficacious. The damp heat of Java and its wondrous green verdure often come back to me in those July and August days in Peking, where the most wonderful fresh green was born. The fresh green of England in spring is hard to beat, but that of Peking after the rains was greener than green. Pink and white mimosa trees, and all sorts of acacias shot forth the most glorious shoots of vivid hue.

There is a saying in China that a road is only good for a year and bad for ten, and really those soft mud roads are terrible to deal with, and in rains are simply washed away. The first asphalt road in Peking was laid during my summer stay, and was, indeed, a few miles of joy to trundle over.

There goes the man with his kitchen swung at one end of his bamboo pole, and his utensils neatly piled up at the other, and his sing-song cry, as mentioned, is unceasing. There goes the medicine-man, and the fortune-teller—and then switch your mind back for a moment and imagine that noisy, picturesque, heterogeneous scene in London, Paris, or New York.

These people know nothing of Extra-Territoriality, or equal rights or wrongs. They go their way down their chief street as their ancestors have done for thousands of years; and to talk of Boxer indemnity money being used for book learning is ridiculous. Give them water and drains in the towns, and dykes and manure on the land instead.

As I came in I said to the hall porter in the desultory way one does say things to hall porters:

“How much longer is this heat to last?”

“Eleven days, Missie,” he replied quickly.

“Eleven days? How do you know?”

“To-day sixteen—great Fu he finish twenty-seven.”

“Are you sure?”

“Sure, yes, sure.”

"And what about the rain?" I asked interestedly.

"Big rain he finish. Small rain, he come."

He was perfectly correct, this porter man. For thousands of years the sages have worked out the dates of the three Fu's, and with uncanny precision they arrive "according to plan." My jaunt was not according to plan. Chinese politics are not as stable as the Fu's, and nothing worked out as I had intended. The unexpected always gained the day.

But life during the summer months is literally ruled by the "FU."

The hottest season in China is during the "Fu" period.

I saw Peking first under snow and ice. I saw it again eighteen months later afloat—Venice in China, with canals, rivers, houses standing out of water, but no gondolas. A pity there were none, for the poor rickshaw boys were up to their waists in the torrential rain from heaven and even motors could not move with the water above the carburettors.

In tropical July, nearly nine inches of water descended upon Peking in a single twenty-four hours. One shower preceded by a high wind and probably the heaviest of the season, fell at the rate of nearly two inches in an hour and a half. A nine-inch deluge of rain was not bad for twenty-four hours, and no wonder it could not get away, but just swamped the place. By the third day this had risen to a fall of fifteen inches, and a river nearby, the Yung Ting Ho, had risen 16½ feet (24 feet being the danger level), thereby making hideous breaks in the Peking-Hangkow railway line, which had to be made good by troops. That rain was enough even to damp the students' ardour. No one could earn money. The shops closed. Everything closed, and no one left their home if they could possibly avoid it.

Summer rains are no fun for anyone. I was sitting chatting to a delightful couple at their pretty house opposite the Foreign Office, where there had been such a terrific demonstration a month before, when one of the servants from their country cottage near the Race Course arrived to say the bungalow roof had fallen in, and most of the cottage walls had collapsed and dissolved with all their nice furniture beneath it. The other houses round about the district, he continued, had done the same, and the servant had waded through two feet of water to get

back to town to tell his employers this cheerful news. There was not a house or building of any sort in Peking that had not had the water in somewhere. Motors were stuck all over the place with water right up to their floorings. In fact the rain became so awful that no one dared venture forth on a tour of inspection, each having to be content with telling his friends later what happened in or round his own particular home. During these July rains everyone's house seemed to be tumbling about its inhabitants' ears. Rich and poor alike all suffered, and the mud in the streets of Peking was really deplorable; so that while the populace were being washed one way, they were being spattered with mud another. One invitation after another was being cancelled by telephone because kitchens or other things had collapsed and all the servants were being employed on rescue work.

And the heat!

From the end of June for ten weeks, it beat anything I can remember. Not that the thermometer was as high, but the fifteen inches of rain in eight days made it appear so.

Even the old Confucius Temple could not stand that tropical rain: in several places the great walls that surround the courtyard had been washed into holes. No wonder most of my friends' modern houses had sprung leaks and had walls washed down and ceilings fallen through. It really is a deplorable time when these tropical rains fall, even cholera germs were reported in Peking's water supply, which was notified as "Highly dangerous." So that added a little extra excitement to a summer in Peking.

An Indian could modify much discomfort. He would draw the blinds and close the windows before the sun was hot; but China is China, and will take a few more hundred years to learn how to keep cool, or build houses and dykes to withstand her yearly rains.

Great Britain has the finest climate in the world. Now then, for a curl of the lip and a sinister smile from some kindly reader, eh?

But I repeat: GREAT BRITAIN HAS THE BEST CLIMATE IN THE WORLD. It's true, believe me, for I've sampled nearly all of them.

I write these words on July 30th, 1925, in Peking, when the place is in flood. China is in flood, so is Korea across

the sea. Thousands are dead, more thousands are homeless and destitute.

Mosquitoes gobble one up. My legs and arms and neck and face are like a bath bun, all puffy and full of currants; only the currants are red spots, and the bun is hot and steamy. All one's limbs throb from the fever caused by mosquito-bites. One sleeps beneath a mosquito-net and feels stifled. One turns on the fan. It revolves the hot air, and gives colds in the head or neuralgia, or some new discomfort.

Do we suffer thus in Great Britain. No. Do we have scorpions or snakes. No. But I've suffered thus in Java, Ceylon, Malay, Rangoon, Calcutta, Agra, Bombay; the Argentine, Brazil, Central Africa—and so on *ad infinitum*. And then the dry heat and sand storms of Siberia, Mexico, Manchuria, and parts of the United States. We don't have dust storms for weeks, and howl if we get fog for a few hours. Give me a London fog for choice. It passes more quickly and does not get into your teeth.

Few people who have not lived in the tropics know the horrors of a rainy season, or what their countrymen have to put up with for weeks on end.

Everything is damp. The air is so sodden with water-particles that one cannot get away from damp. The bed is damp, the sheets are damp. The pillow is damp, and a stiff neck often results. One's clothes in the morning are damp—stockings, and worse, shoes. Lo, one goes to the cupboard, not to find it bare—but to find the mildew there. Leather shoes are covered with white cotton-wool or green cheese—not really, but the effect is the same. Mildew on everything plays a great part in the rains. Stamps stick together before reaching their envelopes, the envelopes glue themselves up before their letters reach them.

One struggles—damp oneself—with damp clothes. One's hair is damp and lank. Here the bobbed fraternity hardly score, for their curls won't stop in and their hair will grow, so they suffer badly and are always in the barber's hands. And last, all leather gloves not carefully rolled away in bottles, or otherwise made airtight, have the measles, or a sort of white spotted fever. One's pins refused to come out of the pincushion, one's needles refused to go into the material. One's keys were rusty and jibbed at the locks, one's scissors refused to cut. But the rain heeded naught; it just poured and poured and poured. And Peking peeled.

Then one's eye-glass cord—even that is damp and clammy, and all elastic bands stick together and to everything else. No elastic survives one rainy season, and many silks—European silks especially, chemically prepared—go into shreds and tatters in a night. Glacé silk does not survive a week.

Furs are terrors, and require as much attention in the rainy season as puppies; in fact there is a good deal of discomfort in a tropical land, believe me—why, even hotel labels, assiduously gummed on to trunks by ubiquitous porters, slide down their side in a river of glue. And trunks, perfectly well-behaved, respectable trunks, exude glue where they have been fixed under the leather sewing. In fact a formerly self-respecting hat-box rained brown tears of liquid glue down its sticky sides. No wonder everyone who can, gets out of Peking in July and August.

There are three great holidays in China, and they also are regulated by the moon.

Our British Bank Holiday is the first Monday every three months, not very difficult to remember, but in China it is a little more complicated.

1. The first day of the first moon is the great one. It is the Grand holiday, the New Year in fact. Servants get extra tips, friends exchange presents. The great cake is made and eaten, and if sent as a present it cannot go alone; but requires to be accompanied by other fare, such as a ham, or chickens. Really strange similarity with the British Christmas hamper and plum-pudding.

2. Then the fifth day of the fifth moon is another day of feast.

3. And the 15th day of the eighth moon is the third holiday.

Then you have two feasts: Feast of the 1st Moon and 9th of the 9th Moon.

This year (1925) is a year of thirteen moons, thus a leap year; but the non-leap year does not omit a day but a whole month.

The Chinese Moons (months) have either thirty days or twenty-nine days, according to the calendar arrangement of the year, which is fixed by the Astrology Office under the Peking Government. No moon has ever had so much as thirty-one or so few as twenty-eight days. In a leap year,

the intercalary month might be any of the moons, just as the regulated calendar fixes it. Generally speaking, two intercalary leap moons arrive about every three years.

Week after week went by. All the Sundays of July and August passed, but the roads to those Western Hills remained impossible and impassable for a motor-car. Such torrential rains, such heat, such flies, mosquitoes and sandflies made Peking in those two months almost unendurable, and every person who could had left the war-like dangers of the city.

September. All changed. To the allotted day the Chinese FU departed and September and October were glorious months. Then, but not till then, did I get to the famous Western Hills, only fifteen miles from Peking, along the ridge of which stretches the great wall of Tsing. Behind again are hills four and five thousand feet high—the hills which kept back the Tartar and Mongolian hordes. And here are clustered Buddhist temples, almost more than anywhere else. They are called "Temples" for convenience, but some are monasteries, lamasseries, shrines; some Confucian tombs, and some mere Joss houses with gongs and noises and food for the traveller.

There are so many of them—about seventy—and so few people to fill them to-day, that the abbots and priests have let portions to anyone who cares to make them habitable and pay the rent. Thus I found many friends had a Temple for summer use and enjoyed the cool thickness of the walls and well-built roof that did not tumble about their ears, and lived amid all the romance of the centuries with the modern comforts of their own kitchen and bathroom. But that summer was too dangerous for occupation.

Ideally romantic and joyfully artistic surroundings.

Here is another instance of the great function religion has been in all the ages and all the climes to build the beautiful, to keep the beautiful, to endow and love all that was refined and exquisite. The priests of China to-day are poor creatures generally, but the masses firmly believe they can change the elements, avert storms, settle with offended gods, stop plague, pestilence, famine or sudden death. Fear and superstitions are still supreme. They often fast on certain days of the year to solicit blessings from Buddha. When recovering from illness or given a

much desired child, the woman sends a red sign-board with words :

“ Every wish satisfied,”

to the Temple to be hung up as a token of thanksgiving.

The sequestered priest I saw was a dear, one of the superior ones. Such a pleasant smile, so clean and honest. His simple little home spotless—his small Temple perfectly kept, and standing in one corner a dozen great bags of grain. That was a year's supply for the Buddhist priest and his one servant. This was a good man. He changed his clothes twice a day and prayed to his Buddha. He believed firmly in Heaven and Hell as all good Buddhists do, for their conception somewhat resembles Dante's, and their Hell is made up of hideous images and tortures like Dante's Inferno. His little garden was full of flowers, magnolias and scarlet pomegranates, and in cages hung the little crickets to sing and chirrup and keep him happy. These Temples of the Western Hills are delightful, the mountains and valleys are peaceful, and guard Peking from many an icy blast.

Among the Temples there are still great scholars—priests who keep up the traditions of the land, and love their allotted work. The scholar holds high place in China to-day, as he has done for thousands of years, and the Chinese Classics are reasserting themselves. In Japan the soldier is probably more revered, and doubtless the priest of India, Ceylon, or Malay holds first place in the reverences of the people. But in China the scholar is still on the highest pedestal. Many of them are great English readers. English is compulsory in the Higher Grade of Schools both in China and Japan. That world-universal language may help them, but, alas, the high grade is not for all, and the middle grade seems a hopeless indigestible failure the world over. Education beyond Capacity.

China is about the same size as Europe, and roughly has about the same population, and roughly speaking almost as many languages, and again roughly about as many rulers. Is it to be wondered at that no one single man can control this conglomerate whole.

Fate brought me in contact with several highly-educated Chinese. Here is the same story as India. The Far East is not ready for high education. European education removes the man, or woman, from his simple surroundings

and lands him on a mud bank in a sea of illiteracy. There are practically no jobs for him. There are no openings for his education. He can find nothing to do. His country is not ready for him. There are jobs, of course, but they are generally filled by the incompetent friends and relations of the man in power. That man controls his ring or trust, and no outsider gets a chance within his family circle. The result of all this in China, as in India, is making for discontent and irritation among really fine, highly-educated men, who find no place for their education, no livelihood for their learning.

The peasant is happy and employed. The scholar is unemployed and not wanted. The "school-men" are neither one nor the other, and beat tin kettles and bawl.

I hugely love the old Chinese town of Peking. It is full of wonder. It is full of Chinese traditions. It smells old. It looks old. Yet modern English lettering is appearing beside the Chinese names and designations of type of shops. It is a rare old jumble of ancient and modern, and the ancient largely predominates.

Peking, for its size, must be one of the most crowded cities in the world. It is like an ant-heap, and the one cry is work and work for daily bread. How could it be otherwise with such over-population. It teems with human beings, and most of them are dirty and nearly all are poor. Their wants are few, and yet it is one long scramble to attain them, poor souls.

Strikes don't make things better—but a thousand times worse. China impoverished herself by millions in gold and the deluge that descended upon the land—as if by the wrath of God at the end of July—that rain was unprecedented, hurt them. It did its best to spoil Peking; but Peking is unspoilable, every corner is picturesque, a very kaleidoscope of colour and variety.

Peking means "North Capital" in the province of Chihli, now made into a Metropolitan area. In China's past history Nanking has been the Capital for the Six Dynasties and Hang-Chow for that of the Sung. Now Peking is the Capital, and, in a way, a great Chinese social centre; but in the ordinary sense of the word there is no Chinese society.*

Men and women do not often mix. Most men's lives are

*Empty deserted Nanking became the capital again in 1928.

spent with inferior-bred concubines, who satisfy their sensual side to nausea and in no way elevate their mind or thoughts.

Dinners are men's dinners. They may last twelve or twenty-four hours. That is to say an hour of food, an hour of looking at curios—more food—an hour's walk round the garden—more food—and so on, interspersed with Mah Jong as the night wears on. Every Chinese is at heart a gambler. Sport has not yet taken hold; these outdoor healthy exercises are not working off their superfluous sensual impulses engendered in the fetid atmosphere of the harem. Then there are no social clubs as Europe understands clubs. Men are not sociable. Beyond these great banquets they do not meet commonly as European men do. The men do have clubs now, but they are chiefly for "Mah Jong," banqueting and "putting" men among the "Sing-Song" girls—the Chinese demi-mondaines who are hired out to amuse at clubs and cafés, and expected to find a man before the evening is over.

It really takes a lifetime for a foreigner to understand a Chinese dinner, and it takes a large part of a lifetime to eat it.

It is a prodigious affair.

It has a beginning, but it never seems to have an ending.

You must not imagine from this remark that huge dishes are brought in with vast legs of mutton or barons of beef, because nothing is large. Everything is infinitesimal. A few seeds of a melon are sufficient for one dish. A handful of sun-dried shrimps on a saucer make another dish. And all these funny little plates are placed in the middle of the table while the guests, if European, help themselves with forks, but if Chinese secure what they want with their fingers or their chopsticks, which closely resemble a pair of knitting needles.

These Chinese dinners are really quite fun, and at one to which I was kindly bidden, we had over one hundred plates and dishes on the table for ten people when we had finished, and many had been removed between whiles. Then steaming hot towels were brought round to clean our fingers. Peking duck is one of the greatest delicacies, and when it is wanted extra—ultra fine, the duck itself is not served at all, only its over-fat skin crisply roasted, which the guest folds into a little pancake and gobbles up.

Sea slugs, birds' nest soup, sharks' fins, endless mushrooms, sun-dried shrimps, curried eggs follow one another, accompanied by tiny cups of hot, strong drink, which is constantly renewed.

Turning to the lives of the women of China, they seem to me deplorable. Think of those sad little "officers' daughters and wives" learning to read at school at Peking. They still haunt me. Fancy mothers of fifteen on whom the responsibility of parenthood through a totally strange man had been thrust, learning to read, and these "ladies," girls well born and chosen as officers' wives. They knew nothing of life and literature, art and beauty, the world or humanity.

How can such women be expected to educate and inspire and bring up children in the twentieth century. Dear, nice, pretty little dolls, but women with dolls' minds, dolls' visions, sub-ordinated to man's desire. They know their sons will in time become tyrants, and they know their daughters will in time become slaves like themselves.

It is no good pretending this picture is not the picture of middle and upper class Chinese life. It is. Of course there are exceptions. There may be ten per cent., or at widest twenty per cent., but ten or twenty per cent. is not enough.

Then again it is very bad for any man to be an autocrat in his home—to dominate to the point of terrorism. Human beings are born humanly, above animals and animal instincts, and because China has lived like this for five thousand years it only means that until she becomes more civilized she must remain a retrograde nation and not expect to take her seat among the advancing nations of the world.

What has China done for humanity these last five hundred years, while so many peoples have been marching forward?

Scientifically she does not seem to have discovered anything.

Her music is nil.

Her art is moribund.

Her medicine is still boiled bears' feet or bits of chipped snakes.

She is illiterate to ninety per cent. of her population.

Her betrothals, marriages and funerals are ruled by astrologers and the stars.

No, no, China is so far behind that she is unable to take her place among the first-class nations, that is amply proved by her corruption and inability not only to rule herself, but to make any one of her twenty-two provinces to rule itself. China has a far way to go, and she must forgive my saying so, but it is her treatment of her women that is holding her back, and the thralldom of her home life.

With Chinese women the chief question is to find a living. Those who are married are all right. If unmarried or widows, the necessity of life often drives them to side-tracks. They become concubines or mistresses. Even for the educated there are few openings.

The poorer class go to cotton mills and factories. But the "Sing-Song" girls also absorb a lot, for which they are sold as slave-girls when quite young.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WAR LORD

Chang Tso-Lin and Tientsin—Great formality, as usual, before the interview—Imposing Guard—A wonderful interpreter—An hour's wait in a strange room with tea-drinking companions—Cross-legged Chinaman fanning himself—The fortune-teller and my fortune—Cigarettes handed round—The largest water-melon I had ever seen chopped with a bread-knife and gnawed by everybody—Tattoos and salutes—East and West will never really mix any more than oil and vinegar—Chang a great opium smoker and Mah Jong gambler; but still a very great little man—Mah Jong only thirty years old—Chang resembles General Diaz of Mexico—His delightful courtesy—Self-educated and self-made—Pertinent questions as to all I had seen in Russia—He knew much and was amazingly keen to know more—Very much alive—How he signed his photograph—His invitation to be his guest at Mukden—Insistence in giving me a cigar—Chang absolutely pro-Foreign and anti-Bolshevik.

I WAS very lucky in Tientsin. The new bombardment had not quite begun then.

Marshal Chang Tso-lin, the outstanding figure of the day, had come to Tientsin, at the other end of his long Manchurian territory, some weeks before. He had promised the Powers to keep peace and order—and he did. Tientsin is a large town. All went on as before. For months he had preserved order after finding chaos; and yet a few months more and his troops had to fly from Tientsin—such is China.*

At that time all the rest of China was aflame, but Chang of Mukden—capital of Manchuria, the birth-land of the Manchus, the late ruling house of Manchu Emperors—was now the one ruler who ruled.

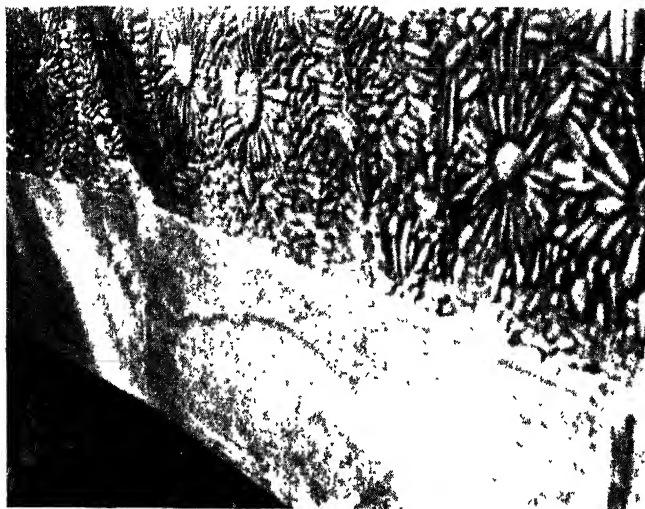
This ex-bandit, who had once been anti-British but had got over that phase, knew how to hold men, and how to hold his principles once he had made up his mind what his line of action should be.

He was named "The Great War Lord"—and he it was whom I desired to see. The interview with the famous Marshal, the man whose soldiers chop off heads and

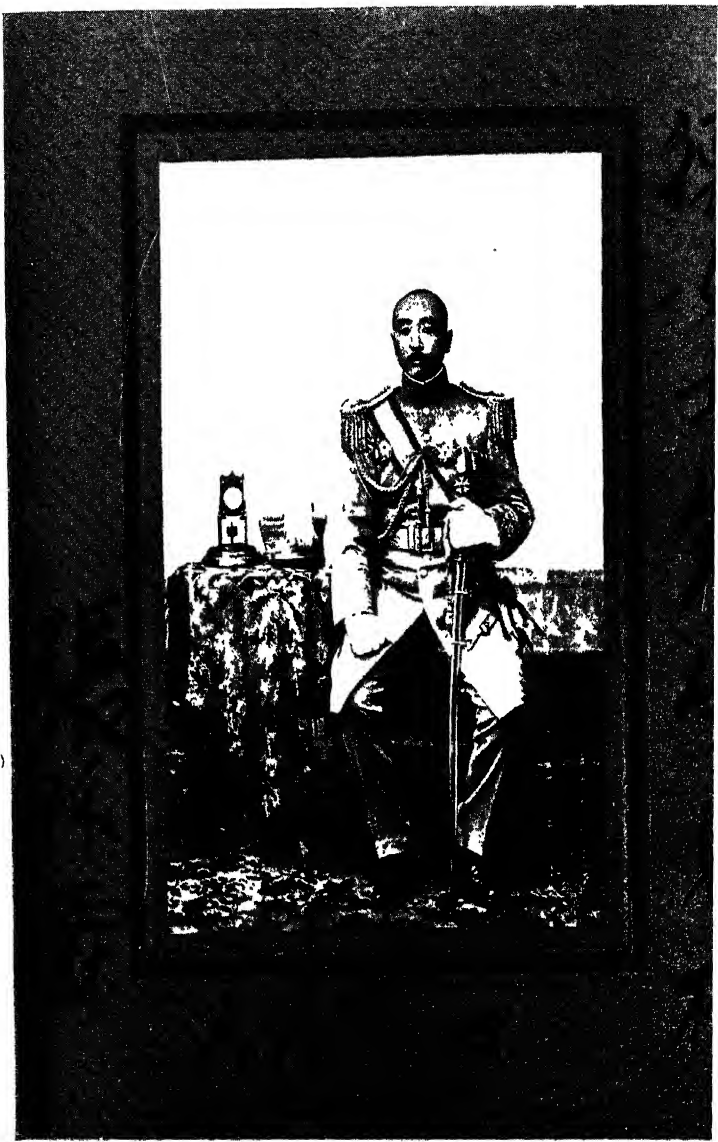
*And yet a year later he was again in possession of Peking and all the north.



The Author bidding the Buddhist Priest stand
quiet at Sir Ernest Wilton's Temple home,
Western Hills.



Fragment of pebble pavement at Jade
Fountain Temple.



The "Great War Lord," Marshal Chang-Tso lin,

carry them on poles as a warning to others to obey his orders, was really a quaint experience.

We passed through the old Chinese town, almost void of the signs and banners, or the picturesqueness of Hong-Kong, Shanghai, Canton, Peking, or Mukden, all of which display such wealth of signboards and flags and festoons.

After about five miles we turned into a park. Quite a pretty park it was, with lovely old Chinese vases full of tall pink lotus flowers with their fine big lily foliage; of oleanders, and roses, of pink jasmine, magnolias in bloom, and geraniums galore. All of these have to be carefully tended in hot-houses for eight months of every year, as the cold and ice are intense for at least three months, and yet on that day the temperature was 108° , and 100° in my bedroom. Poor souls, no wonder men strip to the waist in summer and cannot get enough furs to cover them in winter. No wonder the boys and girls jump into the muddy river for a swim—almost as muddy as the Hooghli at Calcutta, or the Rio de la Plata at Buenos Aires, misnamed river of silver, for it is really a river of mud.

A couple of dozen soldiers at the salute in pale grey uniforms gave an air of importance to the place, and my Chauffeur-General acknowledged their salute.

We came to a fine large house, with a flight of stone steps and a wide balcony all round. A very much finer place than that occupied by the Emperor in the same town.

At the door stood the guard—an imposing array. To keep off the intense heat, a large open sort of matting marquee without any sides, so that it was really more like a ceiling on posts, had been erected on bamboo poles. It ran out from above the front steps for thirty or forty feet, and along the side-walk for another thirty or forty feet in each direction, thus permitting soldiers and flags, and old lancer staffs and waiting people, and even motor-cars, to get some shade in that tropical heat. No one who has not been in the East realizes the necessity of covering a motor, or the agony of jumping on to a leather seat that has been in the sun, and makes one jump off again as if one had sat on a heated gridiron.

There was a great rattling of drums, and clicking of heels and grounding of arms, as we drove under the high matting to the front door. I alighted feeling that this was anyway an interesting and imposing beginning. The one-armed

British Captain, wearing his British war medals on his Chinese General's uniform, drove his car into a sheltered spot, and, like a colossal school-boy, bounded up the steps almost before I reached the top.

Various Chinese in various white or long blue garments met us in the hall and saluted. The host of the occasion was Mr. H. V. Kao, of the Mukden Foreign Office and adviser to Chang, who spoke excellent English—learnt in Shanghai College. He was Chang's special interpreter, and a most efficient interpreter too, as subsequent requirements proved. He explained that we should have to wait. The Marshal had given an order three hours before (it was then half-past two o'clock) that the whole entourage was to start unexpectedly back to Mukden at midnight in his special train. That two most important people had, in consequence, just arrived to see him, but he hoped he would not keep us waiting long.

Here the comedy of the situation began.

That room already contained a dozen Chinese. Some were officers of the Guard, one was a door-keeper, and in the corner was his iron bed. The hanging mosquito-net he was busy mending, standing on the iron tressels, during the hour we waited.

Another was an Amah carrying Chang's "Seventh son." The Marshal also had seven daughters and six "wives," so he had done well for his country according to its tradition. Son "Number seven" was aged about two. He toddled about, but beyond a sort of bathing belt he was dressed as Nature intended, and his large well-formed head was completely shaved and looked almost white, against his yellow skin.

Then there was a dear old Chinaman fanning himself, squatting cross-legged on a sofa.

"He is the fortune-teller," explained General Sutton, "and a very good fortune-teller too."

"Oh, do get him to tell my fortune," I rejoined. "I don't believe in white practitioners of the mystic art; but after having it told beneath the moon on the sand at the Pyramids, by Hindoos on the Ganges and in the Punjab, by a quaint Malay in Rangoon, I should love to hear what this Chinaman has to say."

Long explanations through the interpreter. The fortune-teller was not well. He had fever. He did not think he could concentrate to-day, would the Missie forgive

him, and so on. This was most distressing, and I suppose I looked sorry, for he eyed me well, squatted back upon the sofa he had descended from, and fanned himself again. A few minutes later he rose to his feet and went to Mr. Kao, saying he would try.

Delighted, I extended my right hand. He looked at it long and seriously—and then slowly and solemnly, oh so slowly and so solemnly, he said :

“ Missie will live twenty happy years.

“ Missie had much trouble.”

“ Missie’s worst troubles come when she twenty-five—thirty year old.

“ Missie never sit down. Missie never do nothing.”

All this took a long time. Beyond it he would not go. But he was not far wrong in what he said.

The next performance, amid all the goings and comings and talkings and order for the sudden departure after the stay of many weeks, was tea. We were bidden to sit round a small table, and brought pale freshly drawn Chinese tea, pure and simple. The Chinaman likes the flavour of his tea, and all additions he calls “ mess.”

Cigarettes were then handed round. The floor was already strewn with cigarette ends ; and then, to keep us amused and happy, a perfectly enormous water-melon was brought in. There was no dish. It was too big for any dish, for its green surface was three-quarters of a yard long and about the same size round. I never saw such a size before. It was a veritable enormity.

This was chopped through and through with a sort of breadknife on a once finely polished table. It was so big that it took a bit of manipulating—indeed a saw would have been more suitable for making the first incision. Then the chunks of the pinky-yellow black-pipped water-melon were handed round, held carefully by the peel ; and the whole party—Guard, General, interpreters, the fortune-telling old man seated on his sofa again, and the door-keeper still mending his mosquito-net, “ No. Seven ” son and Amah, Chief of Staff; and a gentleman representing the Peking Syndicate, solemnly one and all munched at water-melon, their noses deeply embedded in its cool chunks, veritably reaching from ear to ear.

Meantime a servant ran about collecting things to pack, among them the appalling little red satin hat “ No. Seven ”

had donned between whiles. So many fans, so many hats, according to inventory. Eh?

Much more tattoos and salutes and running about followed, and after the twopenny fans had been borne away to be counted with the other dozens, the man returned. He looked round. He wanted something. Ah, he saw it. Marching across to a hideous large and ugly spittoon, he most solemnly lifted it up in both hands and calmly bore it in triumph from the room. Evidently the spittoons had to be counted by the dozen, like the fans in the inventory of things to be removed that night to Mukden.

Chinese and Americans dearly love spittoons—just as Russians and Americans never clean shoes except in the street. It is merely habit. There are no fixed rules for spittoons or shoes, for travellers' guidance or even etiquette in such matters. Every country has its own little ways.

It was then our turn. Much of the future destiny of China had doubtless been settled by the visitors of the last hour. Tragedy had been scanned, while comedy had amused me almost to hysterics amid that strange miscellany of people, that strange mixture of East and West. Oriental and West will never really mix any more than oil and vinegar; each will always revert to its own habits and customs.

Chang Tso-lin at last.

Not a bit of it. We were merely ushered with wondrous pomp into another room. It was quieter here—no baby, no guard, no bed, but a really fine sitting-room with a round table in the middle at which we sat. More tea was served. Methinks Mr. Chang had run off for a few minutes' quiet, or perchance a puff of his beloved opium pipe after his serious political interview. He is a great opium smoker. He works, and works hard, from ten to four, and settles vast questions for millions of people; but after four—and it was then nearly four—he hungers for his pipe. Several hours' repose with his opium friend, and he is awake and refreshed. He feeds, and gambles half the night at Mah Jong, as most officials do, and is perfectly fit for work next day.

A Chinese of position gives the following account of Mah Jong:

"The present game is only thirty years old. Before they played the same game with paper cards, which is still common in the Interior.

" Foreign card games have been very fashionable during the last ten years, and Poker nearly replaced Mah Jong. But not now. They gamble in games played with dominoes too.

" *Chinese* Mah Jong is played all over China by rich and poor, and since the revolt of 1912 has been immensely popular; 20,000 and 30,000 dollars have been lost and won in one night (this only among the Tu-Chuns and the *nouveaux riches*); otherwise a stake runs to 50 or 100 dollars, or even a few cents among the poor."

Of opium, he tells me :

" A little opium, we maintain, is good for sickness and dysentery, fever or sunstroke. Over-smoking makes the body weak, but does not affect the brain. Some men do it in the day-time, and wonder why they cannot sleep.

" Smoke—sleep an hour and then work. Gradually one eats less, but drinks sake (hot) more. One can smoke thirty years if one does not expend any energy.

" Opium is much more expensive now, both the Persian and Indian opium. Therefore people replace them by that cultivated in the Interior. Smoking has not decreased. The Generals and officials smoke the best kind and the most, because they have it presented, or seized from others. Prohibition is a farce; in fact it encourages the smoking, as the very secrecy gives pleasure."

Opium pipes and gambling are Chang's little weaknesses, but outside these two indulgences he is one of the hardest workers, and certainly, to my lay mind, the most astute man in China.

Chang Tso-lin had no education in his youth. He fought on the side of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War.

From being a member of the famous Hung Hu Tzu or red-bearded bandits, he now commands 200,000 troops, rules Manchuria as an independent province, and his province is better ruled than anyone else's. It was in 1922 he evolved his independent government at Mukden and separated himself from Peking. He did not touch the Customs.

Chang was born in 1875, so was fifty years of age when we chatted and he impressed me so well. The little Marshal is a personality and not a jelly-bag. He is materialistic, and a born ruler.

The great War Lord met us at the door of his own room and expressed many charming words of greeting.

He is a tiny man, and has small thin nervous hands, with the nail of the little finger about three-quarters of an inch long. His head is completely shaved. His skin is drawn tightly across a high-browed thin face, for he is much thinner than in his picture.

The Marshal was extremely quiet, hardly speaking at all at first, but warming up exceedingly as the hour proceeded.

Mr. Kao translated.

"I want you to tell him, please, how much I wished to meet him, as his career resembles somewhat that of the great General Diaz of Mexico, whose authentic life I wrote, which life was translated into German and Spanish."*

He seemed interested.

"Tell him: General Diaz was a poor Mexican boy, some say a bandit, but he was also a brave and honest man. When he was forty-six he became President of a lawless country, and as he once said to me:

"'I came into office a General and a poor man, I shall go out of office a General and a poor man, when my country no longer needs me.' And he did, quite poor, resigning in 1911."

Chang was now interested.

"Will you please tell him, Diaz was eight times President of Mexico, for over thirty years in all, and during those years he brought order out of confusion and dishonesty, and made Mexico one of the world powers, where capital was freely placed and great railways and harbours were made."

"And why did he fail?" asked the Marshal, with a quick glance from his expressive little eyes.

"Because he had thought thirty odd years of peace would have taught the people to govern themselves.

"'I was wrong,' he said to me in Paris later, with tears in his eyes, in his retirement at the age of eighty-one, 'I was wrong. I should have chosen my successor and helped him, and shown him how to govern Mexico and keep prosperity.'"

Chang was very interested by now, and said so.

"Soon I hope you will be the Diaz of China, and some day I may write your life. So, may I have your photograph, please?" I said laughingly.

*"Life of General Diaz," "Mexico as I saw it," and "Diaz to the Kaiser."

He laughed too.

Suddenly he said seriously: "You came by Siberia; did you see soldiers moving?"

"It is some weeks since I left Siberia. There were soldiers on every platform, but I saw no soldier trains."

"Is Russia poor?"

"Very. Its population is in ruins." And I told him a little of the horrors I had seen. Chang was quite alive to the situation, quite awake, most anxious to be told everything. But evidently he was disappointed that Great Britain was not supporting him. Had I seen soldiers on the Chinese frontier? Was there military movement in Siberia? Had I seen aeroplanes—and much more he asked again and again.

In the middle of our conversation two men entered with great solemnity. Each wore his long white nightgown, and each had a shaved head. One bore in his hand a large photo of the great and mighty master, for which I had asked, and the other a paint pot and brush. The photo was handed to Chang and then he handed it to me.

"Would that one satisfy the English lady?"

Yes—the English lady would much value it, especially if it were signed.

Many bows, and the Marshal accepted it back. He placed it before himself. The two men were standing on either side of his chair. He took the brush, and beginning at the top of the right hand side, he wrote my name. On the left he signed his own name, and then he put the date at the bottom.

Everyone bowed to everyone else, and then the two men withdrew after a word with the Marshal.

In a minute they returned.

Tea again. This was the third time during that afternoon call, and inwardly one wondered if another water-melon would follow.

Then most solemnly I was handed a box of cigars from which to take my choice of a silver or gold paper covering. Cigars need wrapping in such heat or they would not keep in good order. I shook my head, as I do not smoke. Realizing the situation, General Sutton murmured across the table: "Take one, please; it will please him." I took a silver one, explaining I was not prepared to light it, but that my son smoked, and he should have the cigar on

my return to England.* That satisfied him, and he thereupon offered the whole box; this I persistently refused and took the one cigar. On its littlered band, I saw it came from Jamaica.

After an hour, I moved to go for the second time. Then the little man rose most graciously and bid me *au revoir*, as I must be sure to return to Mukden, where he wished to be my personal host. He came to the door to say good-bye, just as he had so courteously come to the inside door to welcome me.

A great little man—that man could rule China, was my summing up as I left. Chang is quiet and simple; but I feel that he knows what he means, and does what he wants. He is a man of character.

It was strange how Chang Tso-lin reminded me in many ways of General Diaz. Both rose from more or less banditry; both were men of strong character. Like Napoleon they were both small men. Both were men of little education but of great memory. Both men's word was as good as their bond. What they promised they fulfilled. But, although alike in many ways, the War Lord was nothing like so great or remarkable a man as Diaz. Diaz was more of the Mussolini type.

Both men spoke only their own tongue, and their speech was of the peasant order, and both had courtly manners; but of course General Diaz had the advantage of possessing one of the most beautiful and highly born and cultured women in Mexico as his young wife. And the pair remained as lovers for forty years till his death on retirement in Paris.

Marshal Chang realizes that China would fall back into chaos, without foreign brains, foreign enterprise and foreign money, and he forcibly said so. The students of fifteen to twenty-five think otherwise.

Chang struck me as a thoroughly reliable person in spite of his indulgences and his six "wives" and fourteen children. His eldest son, known as the "young General," was at one time a promising young fellow. He speaks good English and is very Europeanized. Too much so, for he has taken to jazz and cinemas in excess. (We call this sort of thing teaching native races civilization). Son

*He did, and he referred to that cigar the last night we ever spent together, on his way to his death overseas for his Country, like his brother before him.

Number One is becoming too modern to please his father, who is now impressed with the possibilities of Number Three, a youth of sixteen, and one cannot help wondering what will be the future of "No. 7," who is still toddling. Strange that he should be called "No. 7," by the way, just as we say "Septimus."

Chang is absolutely pro-foreign and anti-Bolshevik—the name of Soviet stinks in his nostrils. He already knew Russia was hoping to enter China at the north-west corner near Kalgan by Mongolia, and exactly four months later, in spite of the imploring request of the President to keep quiet for the Great Powers' Conference, the "Christian" at Kalgan started Civil War.*

Russia outside the gate of Peking is literally true.

*Since these words were written my good friend Chang Tso-Lin alas! is no more. The last period of his career was a very troubled one. During the time of my visit the Southern wave of Nationalism spread northward from Canton to Hankow, and under Russian-inspired incitements and slogans: "Down with Imperialism," "Abolish the unequal Treaties," "To Hell, English," "Expel Foreigners," it soon became plain to Chang he would have to take his Army south to Peking in order to deal more closely with the state of headless unrest into which China was tumbling headlong.

In 1926, having beaten the "Christian" General, Feng Yu-Hsiang, who fled to Moscow, Chang entered Peking with his Manchurian Army and established himself there as Dictator. The Southerners, however, organised a fresh campaign against him, and under General Chiang Kai Shek, who had the Bolshevik Borodin as his backer, along with a sprinkling of Russian Generals and officers in his Army, repeated attacks were made against Chang. The ebb and flow of civil warfare culminated during May, 1928, in the final overthrow of Dictator Chang, who retreated, with his Army, to Mukden, but not before he had received the thanks of the Diplomatic Body for having maintained law and order in a way that had gained the respect of Chinese intelligentsia, as well as of all Europeans resident in the Capital. Shortly before reaching Mukden, a bomb was dropped from a railway bridge on his train, mortally wounding him. He received a compound fracture of the arm, which severed an artery, and caused great loss of blood. No first-aid was given, and his clothing was soaked with blood when he arrived at his home. He was, however, fully conscious and frequently said, because of the delay of death, "Wo ao tsou" (I want to go).

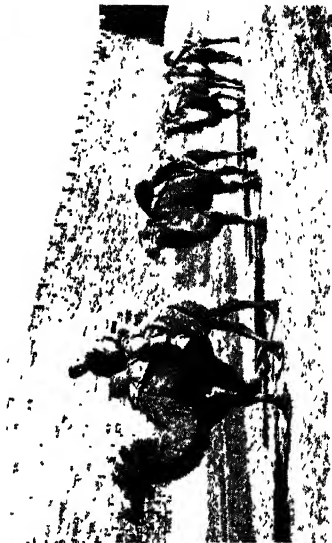
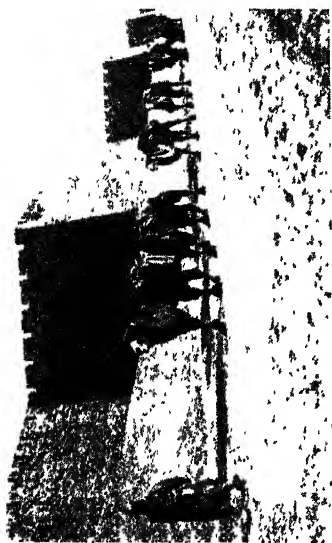
No foreign doctor saw him, two Chinese doctors alone attending him. He died at 10.30 a.m. of the same morning, five hours after the accident. When I reflect on the thousands of similar wounds, compound fractures with severed blood vessels, that were readily saved by modern surgery during the Great War, it seems lamentable to think of this fine man's passing for want of proper attention.

That Chang Tso-Lin was slaughtered because he was unyielding and stood in the way of certain schemers of the Nationalist Govern-

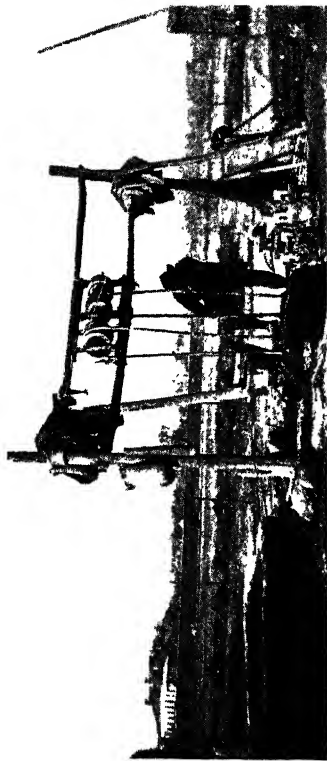
ment seems absolutely clear. It was a Sarajevo assassination, except that no adequate enquiry was ever made. The train was destroyed by dynamite charges pegged to the granite piers supporting the steel girders of the Southern Manchurian Railway viaduct (a Japanese line), and connected up with wire.

I received from a friend in China an account of Marshal Chang's funeral. Over 10,000 Chinese from many parts of the Republic were present. Ushers met all visitors and conducted them to the altar in front of the magnificent coffin, which was gorgeously decorated with brocade and flowers, in the midst of which was a portrait of the late Marshal. Among many others, there were tributes from Marshal Chiang Kai Shek (his Nationalist adversary) and Premier Baron Tanaka of Japan. Buddhist priests were in constant attendance, reciting dirges and incantations, which alternated with funeral music by military bands. On the second day, the Consular Body, including the representatives of Britain, France, Germany, Japan, America and Italy attended. On the third day the body, followed by a procession two miles long, was removed to a Buddhist temple. Twenty thousand banners were carried and six thousand mourning flags, while the large paper effigies numbered over two hundred. The coffin will remain in the temple for a year during the building of a mausoleum.

It is as yet too early to appraise Marshal Chang Tso-Lin's services to China in their proper perspective, but there can be no doubt that he was no ordinary man. His great administrative ability, his well-known financial skill and his capacity for organising and handling his huge Manchurian Army (numbering 225,000 men), were all the more wonderful for being the outcome of innate qualities in one who began life in such lowly and untutored circumstances. The Russo-Japanese War found him a member of a roving bandit gang, of which he soon became the leader, possessed of abilities which the Japanese were quick to recognise. I have already referred to him as being of the same mould as Porfirio Diaz, and subsequent events, up to the time of his assassination, have only seemed to emphasise the similarity in the characters of these two remarkable men. In 1925, during the time of my visit, Chang did his best to come into closer touch with England to secure British backing, financial and otherwise. If this had been forthcoming, Chang would have been strengthened in a way that would have helped him to prevent the floundering welter in which the Chinese nation finds itself. He was unable to carry through this task unaided. Peace be to your ashes, Chang Tso-Lin! You were a great man, and did the best for your country.



Three camel trains, Peking.



An ordinary Chinese well, even in the cities.



Fish market, showing padded winter clothes.



The bird lover takes his pet out for an airing, and puts a little coat over the cage. (See page 257)

CHAPTER XIV

THE LURE OF PEKING

Headlines fill the newspapers—"To hell, English!" the only insult I had in China—The China Treaties—A note on Great Britain's signature, December, 1928—Legation quarters in Peking—Diplomatic policemen unarmed—Footnote Peking—Quaint English: "Missy sleep along top side"—A quaint omnibus—No drains—Statistics only guesswork—The feast of First Moon—The festival of New Year—The Lotus plant—The medicine man: his terrible wares and drugs—Wonderful temples—Fanatic devotion—Confucianism—The Temple of the Tables of the Soul of Confucius—A glance at his religion—The great ceremony in Peking—The luncheon I attended three years later (October, 1928) in London on the 2,479th birthday anniversary of Confucius.

Such headlines filled the paper:

- "WAR RUMOURS IN SHANGHAI."
- "PROTECTION ASKED FOR PEKING SYNDICATE MINERS."
- "BOMB THROWN OUTSIDE SETTLEMENT."
- "HUPEH THREATENED WITH FAMINE."
- "A THOUSAND FLOOD VICTIMS."
- "SOVIET RECEPTION TO RUSSIAN AVIATORS." (Three out of six got as far as Peking).
- "SHANGHAI WATER WORKS MAY RESUME WORK."
- "BRITISH MILITARY AUTHORITIES SHOOT 300 SEPOYS IN HONG-KONG." (A Lie.)
- "BANDITS ATTACK RANCH. AMERICAN KILLED."
- "FEAR OF WAR IN SHENSI."
- "MOB RIOTS ON WHARF."
- "YEAR'S BOYCOTT AGAINST BRITISH AND JAPANESE GOODS."
- "BRITISH UNIONS SEND MONEY TO STRIKERS."
- "FOREIGNERS' LIVES THREATENED."
- "FLOGGING AT CANTON STOPPED MURDER AND BOMB THROWING."
- "100 CASES TROOPS' POWDER EXPLODE SHANGHAI, WRECK SIX HOUSES."
- "KEEPING ANGRY PASSIONS BURNING."
- "SAVE CIGARETTES AND MAINTAIN STRIKE."
- "AMERICAN MAJOR MURDERED."
- "EIGHTH WEEK OF STRIKE."

This is what the people were fed on—and many of these papers were bi-lingual.

But by the eighth week the International Settlement at Shanghai was free of disturbances, although 300,000

postcards depicting the Nanking Road shooting of May 30th, with tens of thousands of inflammatory handbills, had been printed and spread abroad. All this propaganda was being organized cheaply and well distributed by Chinese *students*.

“TO HELL, ENGLISH.”

The Temple of Heaven, one of the great sacred edifices of China, was a queer place in which to see the above written on the top step leading to the sacred golden bronze doors :

Disconcerting, anyway, and it showed how deeply the Bolshevik propaganda had gone. Here, also, I met the first rude person of my visit. He was a Chinese soldier who, like ourselves, was looking at the wondrous inside dome of red and blue and green and gold, all dark and rich and melodious in colouring, which somehow reminded me of the Taj at Agra.

Dr. Douglas Gray, of the British Legation—the scientific and medical representative on so many Chinese hospitals and clinics—and I am told a wonderful Chinese scholar—addressed the youth about the weather being very hot. Pleasant reply.

About the beauties of the Temple—again a pleasant reply.

Then the youth asked him where he came from.

“I am British,” replied the Doctor, “and so is this lady.”

The soldier drew himself up. “English !” he retorted, and with an air of utmost scorn, almost of frenzy, he scuttled out of the Temple, down the steps and away.

I believe he was scared—he seemed so frightened. What nonsense had he been told. Perchance that the English had the evil eye. Anyway, his was the one and only personal act of rudeness I came across in China during all those months, and it was more than wiped out by the hundreds of little acts of kindness by the Chinese of all classes.

International courtesy is a great asset, and Great Britain is more courteous to strangers than any other country. Too much so, perchance, for those strangers sometimes abuse her open-handed hospitality and clog our law-courts and prisons with their evil ways.

Great Britain buys in the world's markets, and trades with everyone, and why should China be any exception. Why should she institute Anti-Foreign boycotts. So silly, too, when trade has never been better in China.

In regard to Treaties, which so quickly become out of date, the Quakers—or Society of Friends—have an excellent rule from which the world might take a hint. They ordain that everyone must make a will; everyone must re-read his will every year, and amend it according to circumstances.

That would be a very good rule if applied to Treaties. Treaties are made by friends; but circumstances alter, and if every quarter of a century—or even every fifty years—the Treaties were read over, and revised according to circumstances, it would probably save bloodshed and heartaches.

Those China Treaties should have been revised by the nations who originally entered into them. And they would have been revised if people had not been busy for five or six years with a European war, and thereafter found China in a state of muddle, which, for the next five or six years, grew steadily worse, until there was no one with power to speak for China, or revise a Treaty with.* Great Britain is a great upholder of individuals. She is the greatest colonist, and why—because she stands for law

*And at Christmas, 1928, Great Britain, who had been the first to make definite offers, signed a Treaty that accorded tariff autonomy to China. Verily a commercial agreement for which the British Minister has been waiting two years, unable to present his credentials to any reliable person. Great Britain then honoured China by firing twenty-one guns. Mr. Wang signed on behalf of new China seven treaties in twenty days. Probably a diplomatic record. May peace now reign. But Japan still held aloof. But in Russia and China no one ever knows what may happen next.

The Times, of December 24th, 1928, says: "The Conference for the Disbandment and Reorganisation of the Army will meet in Nanking on the 26th inst. The Inspector-General of Military Training states that the problem is not how many troops shall be disbanded, but how to find funds to carry out disbandment. He puts the Government troops at over 1,000,000, the Manchurian troops at 160,000—much under-estimated—unclassified units in Szechwan at 120,000, and independent units in Kwangtung at 120,000, which, plus sundries, totals 1,600,000. Their reduction to half a million would cost \$30,000,000 (£3,750,000). He estimates the annual military expenditure at \$380,000,000. The entire revenue of the country is \$450,000,000, and, after paying for the service of the foreign loans, there is left a balance of \$320,000,000, or substantially less than the present military expenditure. The plans of the Administration, which are subject to the necessary financial arrangements, involve a reduction of military expenditure to \$180,000,000, covering the Army, Navy, and aviation. Besides the above-mentioned cost of actual disbandment, there is the financial problem of providing employment."

and order, and, above all, honesty and justice. The result is shown the world over. But while she organized or helped to organize Treaty Ports she could only be one of the party, although certainly the dominating one. Look at the wealth and order of the Treaty Ports to-day; the business done, the buildings, the sanitation, the civilization, and then compare them with the purely Chinese towns or quarters, often only a few feet away, and their filth and sloth and want of progress. To-day China is ruled by unrest, swamped by home-intrigue, and yet struggling to rid herself of the foreigners who have helped her with railways and sanitation, with everything, in fact, for eighty years.

One of the lures of Peking is old temples, old gates, massive walls of ancient days, and another is the street life. That life is always new, varied and wonderful. Every day one sees something one has never seen before, and every day one enjoys it more. It is all so unique, so unlike anywhere or anything else. Its passing is sad. Poor dear, dirty, tumble-down, peeling Peking.*

*The entry of the Nationalist Army into Peking, in the summer of 1928, has worked further havoc. Government offices have been dismantled, objects of value have been taken from public buildings, large numbers of officials have been summarily dismissed, even the very name Peking (which means Northern Capital) has been transformed into Peipin—the Northern prefectural district.

The rifling of the Imperial Tombs, including the coffins of the Great Emperor Chien Lung and the famous Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi, whose body was left exposed, have been acts of sacrilege which have been viewed with horror and detestation by the whole country. Let me quote, for the benefit of my readers, from the letter of a friend in Peking: "If you were to come to Peking to-day and stepped into a rickshaw for a ride round the walls of the forbidden City, your high artistic sensibilities would receive a rude and most cruel shock, for instead of the beautiful old red gates leading to the Imperial City, your eyes would behold those ancient portals all plastered over with dirty blue paint as a background for anti-Imperialistic propaganda signs. The younger, rather radical element in the new Government seem keen on destroying all their country's old traditions. They tell us that the old Manchu and Chinese wedding and funeral processions, the most picturesque features of the daily street life must be relegated to the limbo of the past. The gorgeous old yellow tiles—in fact, all and everything suggesting imperial pomp and splendour—must be obliterated according to the edicts of the new regime."

But though the damage has been great, I cannot believe that the midsummer madness of the Kuo Min Tang, the self-elected Nationalist Party, can prevail in utterly wrecking the wonderful old picturesque capital, which has been the home of so many

When one speaks of the "Legation Quarter" in Peking, one really means a great deal more than Legations pure and simple, for there are many other things—banks, shipping agencies, photographic and druggist stores, kept by British, Germans, French and Americans. Book shops also, in fact everything and every trade is to be found in the Diplomatic Quarter. Each of the twelve Legations has its own large garden with its Minister's house, houses for the doctor, councillor, secretaries and others, and their military guard. So that Legation Quarter is a big term; but the old Tartar city wall runs all down the south side of it, and that part of the wall is patrolled by American and French soldiers, whose Legations happen to be near by. What a scene lies below. Golden royal roofs in the dancing sunlight. Solid old gates made more mysterious by the moon, and with all the mystic haze of the evening covering a fairy scene indeed.

It is all parklike and pretty. Some Legations are better kept than others, of course, but they all listen to the ceaseless caw-caw of the crows (crows don't seem to mind heat or cold any more than mistletoe, which grows the world over), and the perfect jabber o' nights of the crickets, or scissor-grinder cicadas. Birds in Peking seem few and far between; perhaps that is why they are so precious, they are sometimes tied by one leg to a string, struggling to keep a footing on a stick. A cruel performance.

As to the history of the Legation Quarter, by the great Protocol concluded in 1901, land was set aside for the use of Legations, placed under their sole control and policed by the diplomatic bodies. It was then divided into three,

dynasties, including that of the "vigorous and magnificent 'Kublai Khan.'" Even as I write, there is news to hand that the new officials at Nanking are longing for a return to Peking, as there is nothing in that city to take the place of the fine big buildings in which the former Central Government was lodged. But some little time must be allowed them for the sake of the prevailing "face" in China, and during this period a proper formula will be evolved by which the spoliation and ill-considered policy can be effaced and the mad haste to obliterate the former regime can be forgotten.

The stately Wai Chiao Pu (Foreign Office), as well as other Ministries and ample barracks in Peking, are now dismantled and untenanted, while officials and troops in Nanking are occupying mission houses and schools from which foreigners, British and American, had to fly for their lives when suddenly attacked by the Southern Army. This occurred in a wave of anti-foreign ferocity which could no more be foreseen or foretold than it can now.

and each department looked after its own quarter, and contributed to the upkeep of roads, lights, police, etc. In 1914 the Legations were united under one control. There are now 50 or 60 policemen, and 230 rickshaw men are specially licensed. The following hold Legations inside the Quarter :

Great Britain	Denmark
United States	France
Netherlands	Germany
Russia (an Embassy)	Portugal
Japan	Austria (now under control
Belgium	of the Netherlands Legation
Italy	with private residence
	leased).

Outside the Quarter are :

Norway	Czecho-Slovakia
Sweden	Brazil

Leading to the Diplomatic Quarter are five entrances—each usually guarded by one policeman—but in times of stress, such as I saw, supplemented by different guards up to eighteen and even thirty-two per entrance—and also barbed wire as well.

That boisterous summer, every precaution was naturally taken, for the student agitators were constantly threatening to storm the Legation Quarter, as they did in Shanghai when they marched so noisily through the French Settlement after promising to do nothing of the kind.

The Diplomatic body appoints committees of five to manage the municipal affairs of their Quarter. Three are members of Legations nominated by the Diplomatic body, and two are elected by the non-Legation contributors in the Quarter. So it will be seen the small allotment is no expense to China. It runs and keeps itself, and is a model of able administration. A fundamental principle of the Protocol (found necessary after the Boxer rising against all foreigners) is that they should enjoy their homes in peace, and that no Chinese should reside within their specified area. This rule has been gradually relaxed of late years, and great courtesy has been extended to the Chinese, who have an hotel and private houses in the Foreigners' quarters.

Never since the Anti-Foreign Boxer rising and its indemnity has the foreigner again been molested till 1925, so practically for twenty-five years the stranger within

the gates lived at peace. All that was upset and all foreigners everywhere in China were in real danger during the disastrous summers of 1925-6.

The British Legation in Peking is not big, but it is beautiful. It is real Chinese. The most has been made of an old Royal Palace and its character well maintained with domestic use.

As one enters the outer Legation scarlet and gold nailed gates with their guardians, one's attention is arrested by the gardens on all sides, and on the right by a really fine open Temple-like structure with its stone lion-dogs and red pillars and grey-green tiled roof, through which one peeps at the real door of the Legation proper beyond.

The first impression of the Ministers' hall is red. The dragon-covered doors are lacquered red, the floor is red, the walls are predominately red; but Prussian blue, indigo, green and gold play their part as they do in the wondrous ceiling of the Temple of Heaven.

The long walled-in passage to the dining-room and drawing-rooms that I had traversed so often when staying with the Minister and Lady Macleay in winter, was to my surprise in summer a wide-open sort of roofed pergola with gardens full of flowers on either side. Such a transformation—all gardens and bloom instead of curtains and radiators.

I had been wondering as I crossed the garden how on earth I was to explain to the servants, in the absence of Sir Ronald and Lady Macleay from the Legation that summer, that I wished to sit in the hall and paint the front door out of the rain. How was I to begin without knowing any Chinese?

"Missie sleep along topside," said a man in blue with a cheery smile and wave of the hand as I reached the door.

"Missie sleep along topside" was indeed a friendly greeting. The "Boy" had recognized me after a year and a half, and wished to emphasize the fact that I had slept upstairs, which is not always customary in China. That settled it. He knew—all was well—and while the house painters applied their lovely red paint to the walls I smudged mine on the paper.

He was very anxious to take me up "topside." He was persistent. After sundry refusals I agreed. Lo! the best bedroom was in flood, and the torrential rains had come through the ceiling. No wonder the bungalows at the race-

course had dissolved, and the poorer parts of the town were mud pools, and even the wall at the Confucius Temple had collapsed ; when here an old royal residence had also sat down under sheer weight of rain.

That beautiful Legation in Peking was a sorry place without its kindly chatelaine and the Minister, but they returned at the end of October for the famous Conference, of which more anon. Meantime our country was ably represented by that handsome young couple the Palairats from Tokyo.

The finest Government House I know is at Calcutta, and I think the next best is at Singapore. The finest Consulates are to be seen at Berlin and Tientsin, but the Legation at Peking is the quaintest and most colourful of all.

What is the lure of Peking ?

Probably the colour.

The lure cannot be the smells, for in the hot summer they are rather alarming. The dainty, fastidious Chinese women, and very often the men too, drive in their rickshaws holding handkerchiefs over their mouth and nose. They evidently notice the odours ; but they don't seem to do much to get rid of them. And as for those buses and trams on the hot days, how can the poor passengers breathe ? " Filled to capacity " does not apply. Packed and re-packed to over-capacity would be a better description, for they fill them up till there is not even room for an extra mosquito.

There are practically no drains in Peking and five or six thousand men are engaged in handling the city's night soil. House-to-house collections are made early every morning, carried away on wheelbarrows and dried outside the city for fertilizer. Really this is more healthy than bad sewers, and yet the sewer system was used during the Ming dynasty, 1365-1644.

The heat of summer purifies the place ; it dries up everything, and the cold of winter freezes unpleasant things, so only the spring and autumn are unhealthy.

There are something like three thousand of those delightful Peking carts, with thick carved wooden wheels and bright blue covered hoods. Into them humanity packs itself in bunches.

They say there are 33,626 people per square mile in Peking. It is like a beehive, and rich and poor all jostle

one another. Slums and palaces are cheek by jowl. Drinking and washing water is distributed from hand-barrows by three thousand men.

The social needs grow with the population ; but there is hardly any recreation space or recreation for anyone. There is vast ignorance. No drains, no sanitation to speak of, bad lighting, tens of thousands of people sewing and working almost in darkness, as in the bazaars of India. There is great poverty. And, above all, there is no government. No one can help them. Officials think they know everything. Because they had a past, they dream they are still a great people to-day. Yet they are mere children, ungoverned children, compared with the great world outside.

Statistics are mere guess-work, but the police say there are 11.8 births per 1,000 (or 32.6 per 1,000 females). The death-rate is 25.8 per 1,000, 21.6 for males and 33.2 for females. In London, also a capital city, the birth-rate was 7.1 per 1,000 of the population and the death-rate 11.3.

The schools, which are only in the cities are now mixed, and the evils attendant are beginning under this Red influence to be the same as in Russia. Illegitimate children born to children. The scholars work when they will and go out when they won't, and dismiss their own teachers by decree or boycott. Poor old China.

Young China has much to learn. She is even far, far behind India. Both lands cling tenaciously to their traditions, their habits and their customs and are trying to bridge the lapse of centuries with one jump before fixing the piles of cement.

There is still nothing more important in China than its delightful old-world festivals, and among the festivals comes the New Year, called

THE "HSIN NIEN."

It falls on the first of the 1st Moon, generally somewhere in February, the actual day of course varying every year. The night before is the New Year's Eve exactly as in the West. Members of the family stay up the whole night to watch the new year in, with red candles burning, and heaps of sweetmeats and delicacies to nibble at and to while away the long hours, including the omnipresent ground-nuts and water-melon seeds.

The front gate of the house for this great festival is closed, and remains so until the dawn of next morning, when it is opened by the clustered family to the sound of many fire-crackers. Red scrolls, over-written with lucky words and good wishes, are posted up on the gate and also on the doors of rooms. Usually the work of the younger members, a special chance for them to show off their progress in the difficult art of Chinese calligraphy.

The whole family, richly attired in their best, and gorgeously decorated with jewels if they have them, offer sacrifices to their ancestors in the big hall, where the portraits of the past generations are hung on these special occasions, and furniture all covered in red for the lucky occasion. After the ancestor demonstration, the living people exchange seasonable greetings, all the juniors having to prostrate themselves and "kow-tow" to the elders, who receive their homage as a matter of course.

Then the relatives and friends turn up, and the feasts and entertainments go on—off and on—up to the 15th, when the "lantern" festival marks the end of the prolonged New Year celebrations.

On that day, as night sets in, the children walk round the courtyards or gardens, or in the streets, with pretty lanterns of all kinds and descriptions, ingenious fish, lions, rabbits, or hoses, to lend a festive air to the household and its neighbourhood. At this Feast of the Lanterns they also enjoy the little round flour-balls made specially for the occasion, boiled and stuffed with jam and walnuts; these are presented on the table in dainty porcelain bowls, which are called "Yuan Shiao," hence the name "Yuan Shiao" Festival, the 15 of the 1st Moon.

In fact the prolonged New Year Festivals play a great part in Chinese life, the life of the hundreds of millions who are quite untouched by any form of modernism.

The question of New Year's presents is also important.

Presents in money are generally given to the junior members or to poorer relations, if they are short of it. But the presents among the elders require much thought and care, and are often a costly business. Therefore the exchange of presents is a formal affair in China. Even the richest exchange presents with great ceremony. Bows, many bows, hands on hearts, cast eyes, low kow-tows to the ground to the older people—all these are ceremoniously exchanged with the offering.

The medicine man plays a great part in Chinese life. He is an important individual and ranks amongst the learned, therefore the honoured. Most of the Chinese doctors have obtained their knowledge from medical books dating back a thousand years. They gain confidence through experience. They are apparently no good at surgery, but for diseases and illnesses peculiar to the Chinese climate and the way of living, they work miracles. The drugs they prescribe consist of dried fruits, dried leaves, herbs from mountains, bones of animals and fish, lotus-root, orange peel and all kinds of strange things. Prescriptions are often taken to the dispensaries and have to be prepared in an urn, with charcoal fire below, and drunk hot when ready.

The real medicine-man of the people is the most delightful and original personality. One can easily find him in the market-place; in fact his sing-song is so loud, so incessant and so weird that it attracts everyone whether Chinese or foreign to his little stall. He has no pretence at learned education, this medicine-man; his trade is generally descended from father to son, and often the decorations of his tiny shop are inherited possessions.

Look at those bear's feet forming a sort of trimming at the back; they are there to denote that the gentleman makes all his oil from the most perfect bear's fat, and therefore it is pure. Behind them are stag's broken antlers. They have something to do with eyesight, but what that something exactly is, I know not. Then again, there are snakes' skins, considered very important, a little bit of the skin being plastered on to some sore to cure it. To show one how accustomed he is to deal with snakes, he generally has one in a basket, which he takes out and plays with and fondles, as the snake-charmers do in India. But the medicine-man of China does this to assure his customers how accustomed he is to deal with snakes, and not as a show stunt.

Those queer-looking things are little cut-up pieces of scorpion which are put on the chest to cure a cold, and it is quite a common thing for a family to kow-tow, which, as we know, is the greatest form of homage, to both the snake and the scorpion. Indeed the rich families sometimes keep both in their homes because they honour them. Superstition is so rife that they never kill a

weasel or snake, except for medical purposes; a fox, which contains some particular spirit, or a hedgehog, which is considered sacred.

It is extremely interesting to find these superstitions in so many parts of the world. They still exist, of course, in the Highlands of Scotland and various places in Europe, but they are particularly rife in the East, and China vies with India in their number and the strangeness of the ideas. One constantly sees men and women with curious marks painted on their foreheads, or an enormous plaster on the temple, from which a sort of black glue seems to exude. This last anomaly being a cure for headache. A piece of green vegetable matter is often plastered on the temple for the same reason; in fact, a brisk trade is done by the village medicine-man or quack doctor of the market-place, who is always picturesque, very reasonable in his charges and extremely noisy in the way he advertises himself and his wares, not only by chanting, but by beating on gongs.

There are few days of prayer, but when the people want some special thing they go to the Temple to pray.

On the first or fifteenth of each month many Chinese fast all day—no meat, no fish, or living thing, no egg. Holy men fast for one month from beginning of New Year. The year begins in our February.

Outwardly there is little religion in China except at funerals and marriages, and occasionally at a pilgrimage. There are no church bells as in England, although at big temples they sometimes ring one in the evening.

There is no call to prayer by the Muezzin from his tower as in Morocco or Syria.

There are no rich chords of music in the service as in Catholic or Greek churches.

One does not see anything like the number of yellow-robed Buddhist priests in the streets in China one sees in Ceylon. At least I did not. For really, in Colombo, and Kandy especially, they literally swarm. And every yellow representative of the church walked solemnly beneath his umbrella, or an enormous palm leaf used for the purpose. And behind him solemnly walked his "servant." His servant was generally a little boy of ten or twelve, but the umbrella and the servant gave great dignity to his calling. But one does see yellow robed monks in China on all ceremonial occasions.

It was in Peking, at the Lhama Temple, I peeped upon

one of the quaintest ceremonies it has ever been my good fortune to see. Outside the Temple, passing across the courtyard, was a number of priests. They were not in yellow. At least outwardly they wore plum colour. Really beautiful shades of plum colour, which time had mellowed and softened. On their heads they wore hats that reminded one strangely of a cockatoo. These hats were made of yellow wool. They stood about eighteen inches high at the topmost point, and they certainly were most amazing erections.

It was the hour for service. And in the darkened Temple, with a scent of incense and burning joss-sticks, with funny little boys squatting on the floor in faded weird garments and swaying themselves to and fro to a most melancholic dirge or chant, was a wonderful spectacle.

In another smaller Temple near by, the priests themselves were holding their morning service. Here no one can enter. But through a little torn scrap of paper window one espied one of the strangest barbaric ceremonies to be seen on earth to-day. Never shall I forget the noises, the moans, the groans, the yells, the perfectly inhuman cries within that chamber where the priests were squatted cross-legged upon tables while one of their number intermittently turned the prayer-wheel or beat odd drums and gongs. Words cannot describe such scenes of fanatic devotion, of queer scents and hazes, or gorgeous colour, wealth and poverty. There is nothing to compare it by—it is just what it is, a strange yet fascinating mystery.

The Lhama Temples never ceased to fascinate me, and later thither I went again and again, somewhat to the dismay of my friends, for the priests who are very, very poor had been extorting money harshly from stray visitors and behaving badly; but I personally never had any trouble, even squatted alone on the little camp-stool. A few coppers and a smile made us fast friends, although totally unable to converse. Yes, the Temples undoubtedly add much to the Lure of Peking.

Many people prefer the Temple of Heaven, perhaps so celebrated because of the romance of its name. And it certainly is unique of its kind. Its simplicity and solemnity are striking. But it is a modern affair, for the original Temple of Heaven was burnt down and this new

erection is less than a century old.* These are Buddhist Temples. As the people so dearly love pageantry they take great care of their Buddhas. In Peking there are the Laughing Buddha, the Black Buddha, the Reposeful Buddha, the Big Belly Buddha, before which they pray when they want food. There are Buddhas, Tze Soun, Budad, before which men and women pray for children. If no son is born, people often adopt a friend's son legally, or buy a 100-dollar infant from a poor family (a ten-pound note or fifty dollars gold). A bought son is no rarity in China. The religious element in worship and reverence is therefore represented by the Buddhist ceremonies. So one has the two religions side by side. They work together.

Again, Confucianism is a moral code accepted by the Government, while Buddhism is not the State Religion. Everyone is more or less bound up in their morals with the teaching of Confucius, and in their funeral ceremonies and such-like festivals, with Buddha ; so one might generalize that everyone is a believer of both, though not necessarily a strict disciple and follower of either. For the stranger the more showy and dramatic Buddhist side is certainly the most attractive. It has more carved gods and banners and drums and cymbals and show. It is outwardly more attractive ; but of all the Temples, I preferred the plain calm dignity of Confucius—a great pile to a great man.

Confucius offered a pure advanced philosophy of a high moral standard without the petty dogmas of so many religions.

A tablet to the soul of Confucius stands in his restful, colourful and beautiful Temple. It is all so complicated. I asked a scholastic friend to explain it to me and he said :

“Confucius preached righteousness as the highest virtue. That a country can never survive on Force, for it is the human heart you want to conquer and not the body ; the mental and not the physical power. He is entirely a philosopher. Not a religious orthodox. For a family he upholds filial obedience, mutual help between brothers, and mutual respect between husband and wife.

*A strange compliment was paid by the Chinese in the midst of all the boycotts and anti-foreign riots. The Chinese themselves erected a tablet in Chinese and English to “their beloved doctor of the British Legation on his retirement.” And in 1926, Dr. Douglas Gray had the unique honour of seeing his own virtues unveiled at the Temple of Heaven itself.

The ceremonies of worshipping Confucius and of worshipping God are practically identical. Whenever Confucius came to any trouble his heart turned to God. The future life of man after death was real to him, "he sacrificed to the dead as to ones who were present." This twofold worship of God and ancestors is the most distinctive characteristic of the religion of Confucius.

Confucius was a great man. He was a great inspiration, but alas, this cruel hardbound family life is the outcome of Confucianism. Worship of ancestry and keeping up of family "face" is all very well for the dead, but it is cruelty to the living to crush a child's spirit, its originality, its budding thought and ethical expansion. Confucius marked the golden age of China, and was leader of philosophy. Confucius lived from 551-479 B.C. That is a long time ago. New worlds have developed since then. No country can survive on its past any more than a human can sustain life on last month's dinner. Like a great wave of the sea, humanity is passing on. With modern science, its railways, steamships, telephones, telegraphs, the constant and quick interchange of ideas, each land must help the other land, or what is civilization? China is a rich country. She has enormous seaports. She has vast rivers. She has most of the minerals. She has an industrious and overflow working population; she lacks railways and education, but she herself is rich, though mismanaged and misruled. Dynasty and discord have followed one another. It is now discord in a land which the Chinese claim has 4,400 years of history.

So after this digression, which, after all, shows how old and hidebound and tradition-ridden dear old China really is, we will pass into the courtyard at the Confucian Temple with its magnificent old trees—a kind of pine—with massive twisted trunks said to be 1,000 years old. One notices the famous stone drums, which are not drums, except in form, and on them is the world-renowned Chinese writing of 3,400 years gone by.

The inside of the Temple is all that lovely mellowed red so prevalent in China. In a moment I recognized more clearly the details in the streaming July sunlight that I had seen somewhat hazily in January cold.

There, almost opposite the door, in a recess rather

reminiscent of an altar, stands The Tablet to the Soul of the great man China revered and followed for so long. They are perhaps forgetting his teachings to-day; at least a few cranks and youths are, and preferring Lenin and Marx, who take everything from them and give them empty words and worlds in exchange.

This Temple Tablet stands only about two feet high, and is about eight inches at the base and rather smaller at the top. It is of red like all its surroundings, but inscribed in letters of gold—no decorations. Nothing tawdry, all majestic, simple, soulful—only a small stone to the soul of a great man; at the side are places of memory for his twelve disciples. The Bible repeated this.

This Confucius Shrine, the Temple of Heaven, the Lhama Temple, and the Summer Palace were, perhaps, the four things I liked best in Peking, just as I did before—revisiting them did not alter that opinion, or change my admiration.

THE SACRIFICE TO CONFUCIUS was a very great ceremony performed by the Emperors in times of yore. It is indeed the most wonderful and most important left in Peking. One of the last things the Manchu Emperor did before leaving Peking was to be carried there in his Yellow Sedan Chair from the Palace for the great autumn festival.

The President, or Chief Executive, had taken upon himself to do this instead in 1925 as a substitution for the Emperor boy of the year before, and the following strange announcement appeared in the papers:

"Chung Mei. Peking, September 18th.—Sacrifice to Confucius will be offered by government officials at five o'clock Sunday morning and all participating dignitaries are instructed to be at the Confucian Temple before three in the morning.

"Those joining in the ceremony in the main hall before the tablet to the Sage are instructed to wear formal frock coat, either civil or military, with all decorations and medals.

"Officials assigned to the sacrifice before the disciples in the side halls are to wear formal Chinese long coat and short black vest."

"Orders and decorations" have been abolished in Republican China, so this command was amusing, and that the elite should wear "frock coats" at such a purely religious and ancient worship was also as incongruous as

everything else in China. I went to that ceremony and admired its lanterns, and the peep at the gorgeous and ancient robes of those who were officiating. The great sacrificial bronzes are only used at this ceremony.*

*Strangely enough, exactly three years after attending that ceremony at early dawn in Peking, viz., October 10th, 1925, the President of the Confucian Association of China was in London. Dr. Chen Huan-Chang gave a luncheon in honour of the 2,479th anniversary of Confucius' birth. He bid me to the ceremony, and there in London I had the honour of sitting on the right of this strangely-garbed High Priest in his white satin robes, quaint black head gear, and long black widow's veil. Dr. Chen finished his address by saying: "It is most gratifying to us Chinese that you have gathered here to-day to show respect to the Father of the Chinese nation, and a great religious teacher. For by thus joining hands together on such an occasion to do honour to the religious teacher of the world, there may gradually grow up that universal brotherhood and spiritual unity among differing faiths for which we are all striving."

CHAPTER XV

BETROTHED AND MARRIED

A real Manchu wedding—Impossibility of speech—An accompaniment of crackers—The bow and arrow game—The bride arrives in a box—The hour of the mother-in-law—Brushing Chinese hair—Silence and contemplation—The bridal veil is lifted—The legal wife, called No. 1, and concubines—Sing-song girls—An heir is necessary—The father the autocrat—The General the martinet—Arrangements by the go-between—How a wealthy boy is betrothed—Boy not consulted in any way—The seer arranges the date for the wedding according to the "eight characters"—Confucius did not approve of plurality of wives—Chinese family "wives"—The sport of the cricket—Crickets are valuable belongings—Gambling the breath of the Chinese.

NEVER shall I forget an old-fashioned Manchu wedding which I chanced to see in Peking.

The ladies all wore the traditional headdress of black silk. Rather like an enormous, an ultra-enormous, Alsatian bow thickly ornamented with pins and beads and flowers.

No, never shall I forget that curious party.

The low houses running round the four sides of the courtyard had been roofed in for the occasion with matting. There was no air for ventilation of any kind. The day was tropical. Children swarmed. I was such a curiosity in their midst that they overpowered me with their attentions. Dozens and dozens of little dishes on four tables contained sweets and dates and fruits and condiments. Each guest had brought a contribution to this marriage feast. Many of them looked delicious, and so the flies thought, for they must have been there in myriads.

Time passed. And yet time passed. Still we waited. Everyone was most kind and gracious. But I could not speak to them, or they to me, in any tongue.

When I was almost in despair, had patted the ladies, and nodded approval at their huge Manchu headdresses, had refused fly-blown food till I feared they were hurt, I had to feign a headache by patting my forehead and turning my eyes to heaven. How much longer could I hang out. Was it possible to remain. Were the flies or the children worst?

Then—at last, the gongs and cymbals, musicians and drums announced the arrival of the young lady being carried in, in her marriage box.

This sedan chair had been sent for her according to custom by the bridegroom. The chair was covered in red embroidery for luck, having pretty little lanterns all round it on the outside. The bride was hidden inside, and the solid satin front curtain of the chair was not uncovered until it arrived at the bridegroom's very door, and well inside the covered square.

Although the courtyard was packed to suffocation, some sort of a clearance was made for a cauldron of charcoal to be deposited on the ground.

Up the bearers hoisted the chair again to the accompaniment of crackers violently pulled on all sides, amid raucous cries, and the chair was carried across the fire for good luck, and to frighten away any evil spirit by flame.

The "great wedding noise" is of importance. There would be no success, no children, no luck, if there was not much tumult to be sure no evil spirit lurked in any corner. Then the young man produced a small bow and three arrows. He did not seem to do anything with them; but it is an act according to old tradition and custom.

The girl was so closely shrouded in the rich embroidered hood, that one felt sorry for her, for the ceremony of charcoal and arrows, and "talkee talkee" and fired crackers, and drums and gongs had gone on for an hour even in the courtyard after her arrival. And she was still incarcerated. There is no hurry in China.

A room faced me, into which vases and a bowl of living goldfish, and washhand basin, and a box containing the bridegroom's gift of five suits—one for summer, spring, autumn and winter—had already been carried.

The scarlet dress she wore for luck. For this fifth dress was her wedding-gown.

No actual money had been paid for the bride in this case, because these were well-to-do people.

Into that room opposite at last the lady in the box was carried. There the women of the family had already assembled. That single room constituted her "new home" in her husband's old home. There she would live for the rest of her life, except or when she came out to attend on her mother-in-law and do her bidding.

I was dying to peep in and see. But that was not

allowed. This was the hour of the mother-in-law. She it was who was to lead the girl out of her box and welcome her. She it was, with her son beside her, who was to reveal the bride they had chosen to the young man for the first time. Then it was the incense must be burnt, and the young couple must kneel before the Buddha, to be found in every household, and bow to the gods of Heaven and Earth and their ancestors.

Not till later could the young man remove the red veil covering his bride's face, and look into her eyes.

If I would only wait, I could see it all—but I had waited—three hours, yes, three hours in that heat, amid these swarming children, and a further wait might mean another three hours, so reluctantly I left, and devoutly thanked heaven I had not been married according to Manchu rites.

Later I learned the ceremony went on till midnight. Poor little girl, eighteen hours of bewilderment, anxiety and fear. So it was as well I did not stay. Ceremony followed ceremony. After this first flutter the girl was made to sit alone on her new bed. There she had to sit in "silence and contemplation," and assure herself how lucky she was to have procured a husband, and how kind the middle-man has been to settle everything so satisfactorily. The nearest relation of the girl then explains to her what marriage means. Her mother then helps her to wash and re-dress her hair, and decorates it with flowers.

The little Chinese women brush and re-brush their shiny hair till it looks like a black satin cap. Never is one hair out of place, and invariably the younger ones wear a real or an artificial flower tucked behind one ear, with a few stray gold or jade pins or glass balls somewhere.

After that first night of marriage all the forehead front of this little bride would be shaved, that is custom. It is to show she is no longer virgin, and a week or so later her eyebrows are shorn. Perhaps these two enormities are to make her less attractive to other men—but why—she never sees any other men except her husband's family. Women's fashions both as regards hair dressing and clothes emanate from Shanghai.

At midnight the father of the young man "orders" his son to go inside his bride's room. The son must always obey his father's orders, and the girl must follow the

commands of his parents. Then, and not till then, does he finally lift the red veil from the bride sitting upon the bed. Then and only then does he come face to face with his wife for the very first time.

"Where is the romance?" you may ask.

"There is none in China. Marriage is a business proposition."

Some Chinese have one wife—the legal one. On the other hand a rich man may have as many concubines as he likes. Really "Mistresses," as one knows in the West. These concubines often live together with the real wife. A terrible life in many cases. They are chosen from lower-middle class families, or are bought from the class of "Sing-Song" girls, described in Chapter XII., when from \$500 to \$30,000 is the usual price demanded by their employers or "protectors."

The concubines' children are legal children, unless the father does not recognize them as such.

The real wife has precedence in every way and in society she alone is accepted. In fact "number one" wife represents everything respectable. Her son inherits titles and land, and he it is who is looked to to continue the family traditions.

When the legal wife dies, a concubine, if she has an heir and has been with the family for quite a long time and is of a good and respectable character, is often promoted to become the "WIFE" by her husband, but this must be unanimously acknowledged by the relatives and other members of the family.

The Emperor is allowed three proper wives, six concubines of second class—and seventy-two concubines of the third degree.

(Divorce, to my mind, is a necessity where unions are unhappy, and should be made less difficult. We can't boast, for our own English divorce laws are a disgrace. The Dominions and Scotland are far ahead of us in their wide-minded divorces).

A mighty small percentage of marriages are happy in China. They are not even meant to be. They are merely arranged by parents for the production of a male heir with equal quality of blood and breeding in both parents. There the marriage in ninety per cent. of cases begins and ends. The girl has been taken to her father-in-law's house a few hours before she is handed over to an unknown man,

and her bringing up has taught her life requires her to be her mother-in-law's slave.

The husband has been told family tradition requires an heir, and having produced an heir family tradition also allows him the aforesaid mistresses (or concubines), and his wife must accept them—in the very next room, if he so wills. Everyone is under the despotic father, who foots the bills and rules with a rod of iron, until in his turn he slips the cable and his eldest son takes over all his duties and even pays a pension to his father's concubines and children—these children are *not* illegitimate. They are his children and must be provided for and protected—marriage and a dot will pay off the girls—the boys require rather more. Love is absent. The parents seem fond of their little children. After they are eight or ten they handle them as worries and bully them.

A Chinaman once said to me: "We men are despots to our women. They are our slaves, not only to the husband but often to all the 'other wives.' I don't approve," he continued, "but tradition is too strong to alter it."

So while women cannot get divorce, they sometimes die of ill-treatment or grief, or even commit suicide. The twentieth century has not brought maternity to a very high plane, has it? It has over-populated the world, and a large percentage of the world's population is illegitimate, and a great percentage is diseased. Horrible things to say, but they are true. Until we get back to a little idealism and love, and learn to look upon parentage as a great honour and responsibility, not to be undertaken lightly, instead of an unlucky incident of momentary amusement, the world cannot be cleared up. The canker is none the less because it is veiled. Ninety per cent. of women who sin sin from innocence; ninety per cent. of men from sheer uncontrolled animalism.

Surely marriage should be ideal and full of sympathy, understanding and respect. It is the highest plane for man and woman, and should not be entered lightly. To attain true happiness it must be "you give in to-day and I take; I give in to-morrow and you take. You have your friend to dinner to-night and I will be as charming as I can, and I have my friend to dinner to-morrow and you can do the same." The wife should be paid for her services as a housekeeper and allowed her "time off" and her "days out," as the housekeeper is. Each must

consider the other and avoid friction. The wife in China does not even get an hour off. She is the slave not only of the husband, but slave often to all the husband's "other families" as well. Slave from morning till night, the cruel slave of tradition.

As said earlier in the chapter, divorce among well-born Chinese is unthinkable. Result—concubines. The seclusion of the home is almost that of the monastery.

Yet even conservative China is to-day beginning slowly to realize the demoralization of polygamy and concubinage so universal in her midst. The thinkers find that it saps the man's vitality, demoralizes the women, and is a handicap on the children and the source of bickerings and jealousy in the home life. Submission in the Oriental home strangles self-help and all individual development.

The homes are as disrupted as the politics.

The father is the autocrat most feared. The General is the martinet most dreaded.

Now let us look into the early experiences of a well-born Chinese boy, and let him tell his own story.

"I remember well one day when I was a young boy of twelve I was suddenly summoned by my parents to go to the Central Hall of our great house, where a pair of red candles were lighted cheerfully, and a 'jos stick' burnt in full fragrance at the altar of the shrine of our worthy ancestors. I knew there was something festive in the air; but why or wherefore I was not told.

"Father was not on the scene; but Mother smiled at me in a strange way, and took me by the hand to lead me to the shrine, and ordered me to 'kow-tow' under endearing persuasion.

"I was delighted with this unusual mark of affection and at once submitted, bowing my head with great ceremony three times on the floor, which at the moment I thought a huge joke. When this was over the servants congratulated me and wished me much happiness. I was amazed, for it was not a festival day. They told me that I was engaged to a girl a year younger than me, and that she was a relative of good family, and a pretty maiden."

"What did you do?" I asked.

"I flushed and felt uncomfortable, and ran away to play marbles with my little boys friends.

"Only later did I understand that I was 'engaged,' and

heard afterwards that the thing was the outcome of a conversation between a 'go-between,'—an old amah who knew both families and made a living in match-making—and my Mother. My 'eight characters' and the young lady's 'eight characters' had been compared, and the fortune-teller said everything was in strict order.

"The birthday certificate contains what are called the 'eight characters,' so called because there are two characters to each of the following items :

- " 1. The year of birth ;
- " 2. The moon in which one is born.
- " 3. The day on which one is born ;
- " 4. The time (*i.e.*, exact hour) when one is born.

"If you go to a fortune-teller he always asks you to give him your 'Eight Characters' for him to work on. Such a certificate has no official significance or recognition ; it is merely an account of a person's birth ; can be written by anybody who knows it. The paper used must be red if intended for an engagement, as red is the lucky colour, always used on festival occasions. Geese are lucky, too, and so are red ribbons—and with them goes the 'marriage book,' inside which states the lucky day has been selected by the fortune-teller according to plan ; they should be married on such and such a day. This is told by the young man's parents, and the girl's parents agree and prepare presents for the girl's marriage—house, furniture and ornaments."

"But you had not seen her ? "

"No. I never saw the girl, nor did Mother. As to Father, he asked some questions at first, but, being satisfied by Mother and the go-between, he approved, and had nothing more to do with the business. Mother was more curious to know what she looked like. She couldn't be introduced, as two Manchu families are not supposed to meet until the wedding-day. So a photo was finally smuggled out of the girl's house and taken to ours.

"Mother saw it first ; I had a peep of it next on the sly ; a fat figure with large eyes and a thick lip, nothing intelligent or attractive in the whole picture. I was disappointed, but my amah comforted me by saying that fat people are always fortunate and would bring luck to the family ; besides, she reassured me that girls change quickly, and this one might turn out a beauty when a woman of maturity. I resigned and began to live under

the illusion that amah's prediction would come true—nothing to be done. And I just forgot her."

"Was that what you call an engagement?" I queried.

"Yes."

"Meanwhile time elapsed and I was twenty. The parents wanted grand-children, and, furthermore, wished to finish the last stage of their duties to their son—namely, giving him a wife and a home. So at last a day was arranged for the exchange of trousseaux and wedding presents, and a fortnight after we were married. Then we first met each other.

"Strangers we were to each other. She did not please me either in appearance or in intellect. I also did not please her; I was not her ideal, because I am ambitious, and modern."

"But, my dear boy, that sounds terrible."

"Well, we talk little, meet little, and have as little to do with each other as possible. We both realize the mistake, which was not our fault. We have to abide by the contract because divorce would mean 'loss of face,' a disgrace to the family's name, and a social impossibility among the well-to-do.

"So here we are, living in pretence, make-belief, and unwilling but enforced resignation."

Terrible, terrible, and this is China.

To the question:

"Did Confucius approve of plurality of wives?" an educated Chinese friend replied in this fashion:

"No. On the contrary, he preached that between the wedded there should exist mutual respect and love—polygamy is never recognized, in either ancient or modern China. There's only one wife; the rest are concubines. Socially and legally they are ignored; but they have been existing through tradition and custom, and have an important bearing in a family's life and history. They are the outcome of a defective and despotic marriage system and a safety valve for its over-pressure.

"And so in due time arrives the baby. If it is a girl it is ignored, and later will be disposed of as a chattel, as its poor little mother has been. If it is a boy there is much family rejoicing, because it is symbolical of ancestry.

"Is it christened?"

"No, christening is a Christian rite; Chinese, therefore, have no christening for their babies. But they do have a

little ceremony on the third day after birth, when the baby is having his first bath and is presented to the relatives and friends in his, or her, elaborately-embroidered wraps. There is often a regular feast and thanksgiving in the house, and eggs coloured in red are distributed among the visitors as symbols of luck. Then, when the end of the first month arrives, there may be another feast and merry-making, on which the baby's hair is generally shaved. The rich often let it grow for one month."

The name is not given until days afterwards, and is arranged by the father, who can call him what he likes, but one of the two characters must conform to the character or prefix, as determined by the family's biography. This is common to the members of the generation to which the baby belongs.

The reason that people at home find Chinese names so confusing is because of the restrictions placed by the classical old "Po Chia Hsing," the hundred Family Name book of unchangeable monosyllabic surnames. A Chinese telephone Directory has page after page of common names equivalent to our "Jones's" and "Smiths" with two other names tacked on; this lacks the many historic and descriptive names we have in England.

A friend told me about telephoning a Chinese friend: "Hallo, who is that?" he asked. "My name is Wang." "Yes, but there are 25,000 Wangs in Peking, which are you?" The reply came, "I'm the elder brother of the Wang who dined with you in the British Legation last night."

So having been betrothed and married and *not* christened, let us take a jaunt to the Cricket Den.

Cricket-fighting is a pastime among all classes. They take as great care of their crickets as jockeys do of their horses.

"We used to have, also, cock-fights," said the nice Chinaman, who took me out to see the crickets fight, "but that is now extinct. Formerly cock-fighting was considered the more aristocratic game, but by degrees the good fighters cost more and more money, and got killed, so this cricket-fighting has taken its place."

"Where do you get them?" I asked.

"Oh, the crickets are caught in garden or courtyard. The little boys are very clever at it. They hear the

chü-chü noise which discloses the whereabouts of the little beast."

We went to a weird place, and it was a weird scene.

People are very proud of their crickets, and when they are ready to fight they often carry them out to a sort of café where there is the proper table for this important sport.

Both the very rich and the very poor keep crickets. They are black, and they make a noise when they come out of their chrysalis, and take about twenty days to develop. The cricket is born in the Autumn season, and with luck lives for about nine months. One copper will buy five crickets, that is to say, about a fathing, but on the other hand a good fighting cricket will cost as much as fifty dollars or five pounds in gold. There are, in fact, pedigree crickets and family possession crickets, for which large prices are paid.

The greatest care is expended on the fighters, the little basin in which they live is washed twice a day. They are fed with fresh beans and finely-chopped sheep's liver, and given water to drink. If a cricket is lucky enough to survive many fights he becomes the "honourable cricket," and then is given a wife as he has shown himself of such value that his strain must be continued.

The Cricket Den was a weird place. A small Chinese, rather low-class house with a large table, and the host himself to look after the proceedings and see that there was fair play, just as the croupiers do at Monte Carlo.

Like ponies, the crickets are given names; some have quite a string of elaborate nomenclatures.

There is great gambling on the game, and being in China there is, of course, much talkee-talkee before anything starts or is settled.

Intimate friends do not gamble in money; they gamble in kind, bet on their own particular crickets; they will fight them for a roll of silk or a chest of tea or something of that sort. But over the cricket matter called CHU-CHU GHUEKA they become as keen as mustard. It is their chief sport.

Among the people who are not so well off, or are younger, they fight with green grasshoppers. They are the singing kind called KOU-ERH, so beloved by coolies and tailors as they chirrup in their tiny two inch cages, and these are very cheap. Cage and all, half or a third of a farthing.

Or if they cannot afford a cage, they buy fifteen or twenty for a farthing and keep them tied by the legs.

One sees them in every market and meets them in every Chinese home. The love of gambling is so great, they make a sporting gamble by letting the little grasshoppers fight, and they know the fighting spirit by the length of their legs and the width of their chests.

Gambling is the breath of life to a Chinaman.

CHAPTER XVI

" GILBERTIAN CONDITIONS "

The Russian Embassy eats chocolates—Wonderful Press headlines—General deadlock; but alarming reports—Rumour Japan goes to war with the United States—British goods hidden away—I am told to pack, preparatory to a "bunk"—Danger in the air—Expect the staff to leave every night—The Foreign Office at home sat dumb—Lives imperilled—Monster student demonstrations—British turned not a hair—Just sat waiting to be killed—Gun-holes made in the Russian party wall—Was it a comedy or tragedy?—A Chinese lady loves to be sixty.

ONE day I chanced to go into a famous cake shop in Peking. It was July and most of the families were away from boycotts and troubles.

"What ever do you do with all those cakes?" I asked, seeing baskets full on the counter freshly cooked.

"They go to the Russian Embassy."

"The Russian Embassy?"

"Yes—they are our best customers, the Soviets eat lots of cakes."

Ye gods! Russia and Siberia starving and the people in rags. And yet the only Legation to be extravagant enough to order cakes and sweets in large quantities was Russia, whose Ambassador and endless helpers fed on chocolates and creams paid for by the taxes squeezed from those starving people left at home. Fact is stranger than fiction, eh?

To turn for a moment to my old friend W. S. Gilbert—how he would have laughed at modern Chinese rules.

Ninety-two prisoners had been condemned to death in Shanghai. There was no one to execute them. Their numbers were swollen by others for banditry and robbery—but there the first ninety-two stayed and waited. So, after all, those hatchets the soldiers carry are not used even when the law has deemed them necessary.

Gilbert would have loved the soldiers marching through the streets with their practical varnished umbrellas slung in grey bags upon their backs. No wonder the soldiers stop fighting in rain—such rain—and shelter under their umbrellas. Wise men. War in China begins and ends according to the weather chart.

170 AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

And while the students were telling everyone how safe China is and how well it is ruled—

SHENSI NOT SAFE appears as a headline in the Peking daily paper of August 15th, and the Chinese Foreign Office advises the various legations to warn their nationals not to travel.

Another headline about this time stated :

JAPAN GOES TO WAR WITH AMERICA.

This came out of the quite ordinary episode mentioned below of selling the rights of anything to two countries at the same time and which may lead to conflict later.

About 1919, Japan entered into a thirty years' contract with China for the monopoly of wireless radio.

Three years later China entered into another and quite similar agreement with United States, giving them radio control for thirty years also.

Deadlock. Japan now furious—America now furious. Both refuse to give in.

Up pops Great Britain, suggests the rights should be International. China, quite unperturbed, just allows all the other nations to take over the matter and fight it out among themselves. China meantime has had her money from both sides, and spent it. Clever China—Duped United States—Astute Japan.

How Gilbert would have loved it all—that was one's thought by August 16th. On that day the coolies in Shanghai again went out on strike. The strike pay failed, so in they went again. More claims and whips went round China, money appeared. Coolies again called out—"blackmailed" would be a more suitable word, as, once the order was given, death, hell, and all the rest of the horrors await those who refuse to comply, together with all their present families and, worse still, all their past ancestors.

Accordingly out they came again.

Chinese puzzle. Daily question : "Who is in to-day—and who is out ?"

BOMBS IN HANKOW, OR HONG-KONG.

MILLS WRECKED IN SHANGHAI, OR TIENTSIN.

MASS MEETINGS HELD—OR NOT HELD.

GUARD DOUBLED, TREBLED, OR QUADRUPLD. NEXT DAY GUARD GOES BACK TO NORMAL NUMBER.

"Stephens' British blue-black ink not in shop," but on insistence it is gaily produced from the background : ditto

English needles and cottons. In fact they all appear when the would-be purchaser insists.

People shot daily.

New posters constantly appearing, and all the fine gates smeared with two-foot Chinese lettering of insult to the foreigner, such as :

“Is this the way to treat your hosts?” with a nude student dying below. But students are never nude, only coolies go about semi-nude.

I went forth to paint that gate one day. I did the gate and the wall. Then a crowd of police surrounded the rickshaw, and I had to leave. Determined to get it, I returned a few days later. Got out and boldly stood below. Not a bit of it. A crowd of people and police made it impossible. They were determined I should not paint that picture, although that picture had presumably been put up for people to look at and admire.

Third attempt in a friend's motor car with two chauffeurs. Out I jumped. One stood on either side of me. I clicked the Kodak and here it is. That scurrilous production remained on Chien Men for five long months. At the most crowded part of all Peking, a sort of Piccadilly Circus junction, so that all might see it.

On August 10th I was told to pack. Rumour had it there would be serious trouble on the 12th, and that I should have everything ready, so that, if necessary, I could go off with a suit-case. Certainly the students and Soviets and Communists did their best to foment that “serious trouble”; but they failed. Rather one should say, the Government for once woke up and summoned soldiers and police, and took a strong hand. Tientsin, eighty miles away, tried the same intimidation a couple of days later, but for the second time the Government acted. Crowds were forbidden, and yet before Christmas the Powers had failed again, and the International train to Peking could not run the eighty miles and the mails were all stopped, and Feng's soldiers were in possession of Tientsin instead of Chang's.

The packing was a funny process, as I had not the slightest idea what I was packing for, or where I was going to.

Writing materials and notes, paint box, brushes and paper were my main ideas. They must go if everything else had to be left behind. For they could not be easily

replaced. After that some thin underclothes and cotton frocks and canvas shoes, with toilet requisites, sufficed for the rest. Then a cabin-box was filled with winter clothes in case things got really bad and I had to go to sea. Another larger trunk took all my best clothes and evening toggery, none of which were really of importance either at sea or in a revolution, so could take a lonely chance anywhere.

In July practically all women and children had gone out of Peking. The weather is trying, and Peking fever, a sort of influenza, is prevalent. There were few foreigners as times were dangerous, and these were all men. Had more serious trouble come, the Britishers were to make for the British Legation, the Americans for the American Legation, the French for the French Legation, and so on. I felt that it would be kinder for me to leave altogether, or some of my good friends at our Legation might think it their duty to house me—and feeding would become a serious item. Besides, I might have to stay for an indefinite period if either an anti-foreign scrap, or a serious war between the North and South arose—both of which were in the offing.

I packed those two trunks late into the night, and left the suit-case ready. As I was ready, I had not to depart. Every night we expected the entire staff to leave. They dare not go outside the Legation quarters in which the hotel was situated.

But there is no denying the fact there was danger in the air—and my hotel was only three hundred yards from the Soviet Embassy and its three hundred satellites.

From day to day during all these months, one lived among lies and intrigue, misrepresentation and corruption.

Russia sent out amazingly inaccurate news of their success.

America offered everything to China, and at the same time forbade Chinese or Japanese to enter her ports and turned those who were there away.

Parliament in London sat dumb. Why? Because she was foolish enough to be polite, while every other country suggested something more or less ridiculous. We once led in China—why hold back? Our peoples are the most numerous and our own businesses far the largest. It is our place to lead.

It was a veritable romance—a real tragedy; lives were

being lost in fight, and more lives lost by flood—one hundred thousand at one place were dead or homeless, and unprecedented was the heat. Boycott was paralysing trade.

And that was what one lived through in those exciting days, watching nations sitting still, and the great big gamesters with bluff and lies succeeding, and enjoying chocolates and cakes, and singing the Marseillaise for every passer-by to hear.

Having lived for months and months in the turmoil and strife of China, the whole subject seems to me one of despair. Why should these good kindly folk with their meritorious ancestor-worship—which means that their own lives should never disgrace those who went before them, and that they must bring up their children in their happy simple home life, to help the young, and the young in their turn to help them when they are old—why should these people be exploited by governors who cannot govern, by generals who were bandits themselves a few years back; by the interference of meddling Russian or misguided missionaries who could do far better work missioning in their own lands? Why must these people be stirred up, and bidden fight first on one side and then on another? Why must their daily bread be taken from them by strikes and boycotts and other devilments, of the very words for which the ordinary Chinese has no knowledge or understanding?

August 12th is Grouse day at home. Sportsmen are out on the moors killing their birds and tramping over heather in tweeds and brogues.

We in Peking are sitting in damp heat—for there was another tropical downpour in the night, and many parts of Peking are still a foot under water—we are still waiting to know if we are to be shot down or not.

A British massacre would make a fine headline in these days of sensationalism. But the British turned not a hair.

Having got some of the servants out of the British Legation by strategy and blackmail, the students planned a monster demonstration for all servants of all kinds of foreigners for four o'clock in the Park to-day.

“MONSTER DEMONSTRATIONS”; bucked inflammatory youth and hot-headed speech, at the present crisis might easily have ended in massacre. Perhaps the Government realized that, for the Government got busy.

The guards at the entrances to Legation quarters were increased to sixteen—eight on either side of the road—and soon were doubled again to thirty-two . . . and these were splendid looking men. The pick of Peking. Police fully armed paraded the streets outside in pairs, and lined the roads at intervals. A regiment with its beheading hatchets was much in evidence ; in fact we had quite a dramatic entertainment staged.

Then we waited for the students—for the “ ill-used, badly-treated servants ” (who own they have no grievance at all)—and we waited. Just calmly waited to be killed.

Time went on. Four o'clock—four-fifteen—four-thirty—four-forty-five—even five o'clock ; and then rumours flew round that the Government had awakened up and had stopped the whole thing.

Soldiers had been arriving in Peking for days—report said 15,000 of them—because they might be wanted—and lo ! . . . their mere presence sufficed to rob the students of their hoped-for massacre of all the foreign residents in Peking.

There are 12,000 British residents in China and 9,153 Americans. These are nearly all professional and commercial people of the middle class. Japan has the greatest number, 152,848, and there are 96,727 Russians, but in these two latter nations the great majority are small traders and workmen. While there are 725 British registered firms, America has not more than 377 firms, which would indicate that Great Britain has a much heavier stake in China than has the United States.

One cannot emphasize too strongly that Great Britain is the most important foreign interest in China. Her two leading commercial firms, known as the “ Princely Houses,” have ramifications all over the country, with their sugar estates, cotton mills, dockyards and machinery halls. Japan also has wide interests, though to a lesser extent. Though a number of smaller Powers have already accepted Treaty revision and have given way on points they do not have interests worth safeguarding to anything like the same extent as Great Britain, Japan or America.

To go back a moment.

In the House of Commons on July 30th, a question was asked with regard to the reported loopholing by the Soviet

Envoy of the British Legation in Peking. That strange story of the wall may for ever be shrouded in mystery. As I heard it from an American business friend it was this :

An American soldier, from his wireless outpost on the Great Wall itself, saw strange doings behind the wall of the Russian Legation. He notified the British, who live on the other side of that party wall. The work was carefully watched. Secretly and at night the Russians pulled bricks out of their dividing wall, drilled holes large enough for a gun to point directly at the different roads which the British use ; but they did not cut right through. Then guns were brought up to the holes-to-be, and sandbags were discreetly laid below the wall.

The plan had been arranged carefully. There was to be a great Chinese student party in the Russian Legation ground, and at a given moment the Chinese were to rush the ten-foot wall. In the *melée* they would fire. Then, of course, it would be sworn (as before) that the British fired first. And as the British would, they thought, be totally unprepared, they would easily rush in and seize the British Legation quarters.

That was one version. There were others. Anyway, much mystery surrounded that dividing wall within a stone's throw of where I lived.

The Chinese paper, *Min Pao*, of August 16th, made a significant statement :

“A delegation of the various public bodies visited the Chief Executive, Marshal Tuan, this morning, protesting strongly against the high-handed policy of the Peking and Tientsin police chiefs in dealing with the present-day Chinese events. The third campus of the national university has been guarded by armed police since Wednesday when the police stopped the demonstration of the employees of the British Legation.”

Really one was not sure from day to day whether one was living in Comedy or Tragedy, or merely watching Opéra Bouffe.

A charming little Chinese lady of discernment and position expressed herself thus :

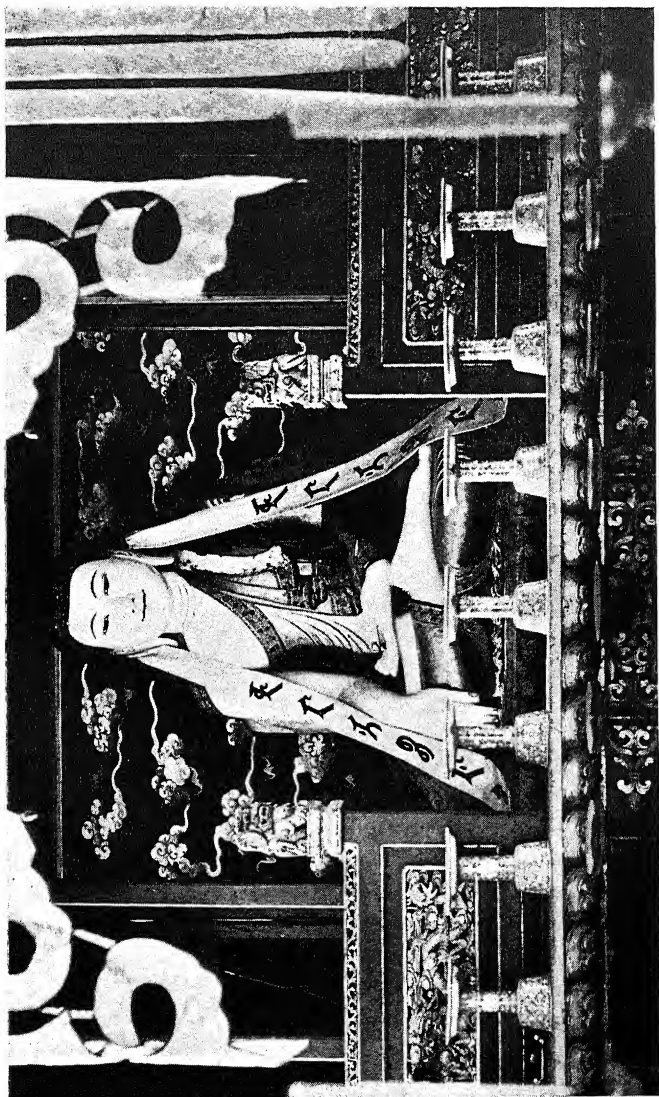
“China is as big as Europe and her population approximately the same. She is as diversified as Europe. Every province must rule itself, and govern itself. There must be one President over all those provinces for international complications, and as a head for other lands to deal with.

"Up to now we have guarded our women in seclusion, even the prostitutes had to be sought by the red lamp, they did not solicit in the open streets. But this Bolshevik Strike-cum-Soviet move has brought our girl students out into the public noise, and sent them from house to house to ask for money for the strikers, and even taught them to hold up men in rickshaws for the same purpose. Madam, that is bad. It is not a long way from holding up men in rickshaws for money for strikers to holding up men in the streets for even less moral purposes. Some of our girls have become as wild as the girls of the French Revolution."

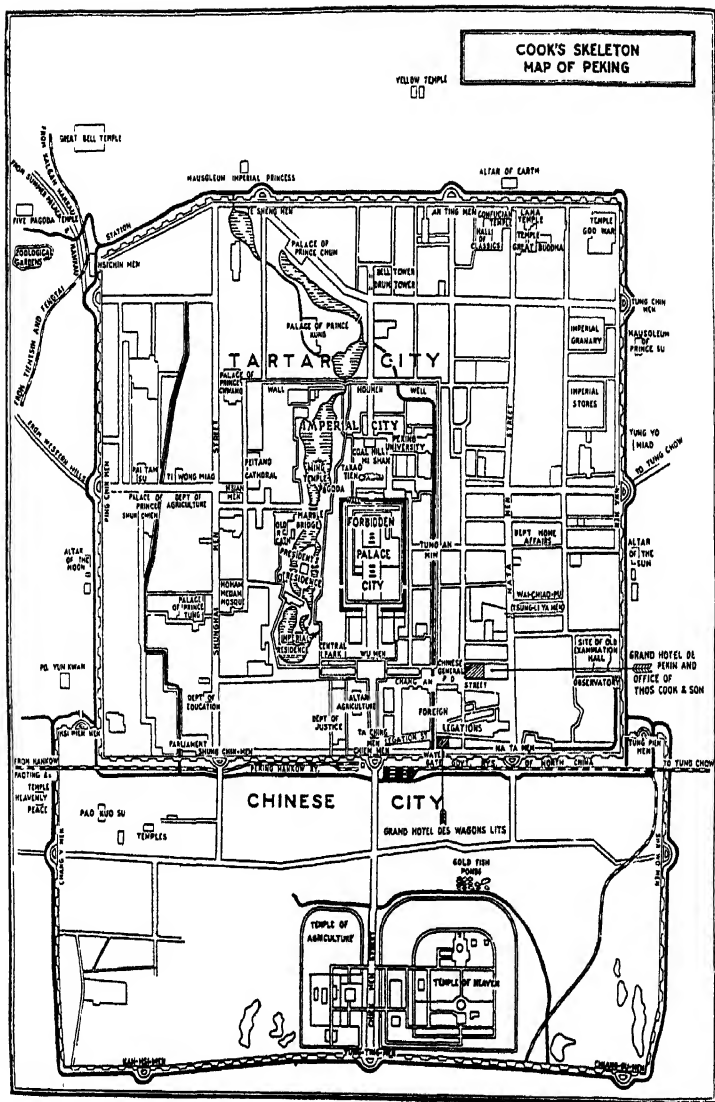
And with a little nod of her head she added :

"I am sorry. I have reached the age of sixty and people respect me, because you know in China age is greatly respected. It is a fine thing to be sixty, but I am sorry, because I wonder when those girl students are sixty if they will have lost that respect I enjoy and wear short dresses and bobbed hair and look ridiculous and be unloved."

Verily, out of the tragedy of Russia into the comedy of China ; but a comedy that had killed and tortured hundreds of thousands.



The White Jade Buddha, Peking. Really a woman, emblematic of purity, with the "Pill of Life" between her fingers. Far above life-size, with as benign an expression as the famous bronze Buddha at Kamakura in Japan. The White Jade Buddha is carved in one piece, which came from Burmah



Map showing the Walls of Peking.

CHAPTER XVII

IMPASSE AT ITS HEIGHT

A month has passed: a month since I packed to "bunk"; so packed again—European women and children all at the sea—Strikers everywhere—Russia promised students money—It never came—Government impotent—Sir John Jordan on the definition to right of residence in China—No ruler since the death of the Dowager Empress—Bolsheviks stirring up Canton—The British Navy exasperated, but told not to fire—British men, women and children in serious position—Barbarity on all sides—No class prejudices in China—Peoples' love of nature—Taking a bird for a walk—The farmer's life: patience and industry—Three thousand troops at Tientsin—British Legation servants walk out—Summing up of the situation in 1928.

A MONTH had passed since I packed in a hurry to be ready to leave Peking at a moment's notice, if necessary. August was waning, and things had quieted down considerably owing to the surprisingly strong action of the police. Foreigners from all towns were drifting back to their country agencies, or mills, or pits. They were not allowed to work them, and the women and children remained away under advice; but the managers were allowed to return to their homes and guaranteed daily supplies of a sufficiency of food through the Government, and Government protection up to a point was given.

Business was, of course, still at a standstill everywhere. Chinese business is dependent largely on foreign business, and as intimidation had stopped foreign business and shipping, naturally Chinese affairs were all out of gear and there was a sort of general paralysis of trade. Yet, paradoxically, Shanghai at the same time was beginning to ask for Manchester goods. For, though the Chinese Chamber of Commerce had declared a boycott against British and Japanese goods, they were unable to carry it out, eighty per cent. of the cotton fabrics used in China being manufactured in England or Japan and not procurable elsewhere.

Who gained?

Not the strikers. They were called out under promise of strike pay—and the strike pay did not long materialize.

Result, more poverty and misery than usual; and all brought about to amuse Russia, who had her tongue in her cheek and a very big wink in one eye. She still filled the Press daily with the wonderful success of Russia, and promised China the same millennium of bliss, and poor China believed the well-distributed lies, and sank lower and lower into the abyss. She also kept on announcing that Russia and England were sending money to the strikers.

The money never arrived.

Poor China. She is strangling herself.

Nevertheless, Russia did not pull off another Anti-Foreign Boxer affair, and so she was able to skip out of the back door almost unnoticed and unblamed, having carefully stirred the civil war-pot and left it to boil over and weaken China—always with the hope of exerting her own recuperated power all the more strongly when the internal domestic broil should cease. Really, my admiration for these world intriguers is profound. Their game of bombast is superb. They have the sharpest brains anywhere, but their day will come when the world peeps inside Russia, and the bombast stands revealed and the bully disarmed.

All nations in London are respected. No one molests their homes. Britain stands pre-eminently for freedom. It is the most democratic, in fact, the only really democratic land there is, and its Government governs—or used to.

In China what semblance of Government there is does not govern, and she certainly could not secure the safety of one foreign life were it *not* for the Treaties. Right of residence does not seem to be understood in China. What would Chinese or any other nation say if London kidnapped all their servants? All nationals have suffered in China. Just suppose the state of things if every French, German, Italian, Chinese or Russian residence, factory or mill, were intimidated and its servants and hands walked off.

Thus Sir John Jordan defined the right of residence in China:

“SIR,—The right of residence at five ports on the coast of China was acquired by the Nanking Treaty of 1842. By subsequent treaties with Great Britain and other Powers, the original number of Treaty Ports has been largely

increased, and in recent years China has on her own initiative declared a number of ports and inland marts open to foreign trade. At two of the original ports, Shanghai and Amoy, there are international settlements set apart for the use of foreigners, but the authorities of these settlements exercise no control of any kind over the cities of Shanghai and Amoy. At Canton, Hankow, Tientsin, Kiukiang, and Chinkiang there are concessions similarly set apart for foreign residence. These concessions are administered by the authorities of the Powers to whom they are leased, but these authorities have nothing whatever to do with the government of the cities of Canton, Hankow, Tientsin, etc. These concessions are of moderate dimensions, and most of them are exclusively occupied by foreigners. At Canton the British concession comprises 44 acres of land; the area of the Hankow one is 149 acres, and some of the others are much smaller. At other ports and marts foreigners either live scattered amongst the native population or on areas administered under land regulations promulgated by the Chinese Government.

"So far from foreigners having taken over the government of Chinese cities, even their right of residence in cities adjacent to foreign settlements or concessions has always been contested by the Chinese Government, and has in practice in most cases been denied to them."

That delightful insanitary city of Canton ceased to be Chinese about the spring of 1925. The simple folk of that deliciously dirty, untidy, slipshod, picturesque spot dropped into the Bolshevik mouth, and were used by their strong jaws to destroy China and bite into her foreign trade. Canton went red.

Little over a year before when I was there, as referred to in a later chapter, Canton was enjoying a civil war of its own, and Sun Yat Sen was sitting on a gunboat ready to fly, while shots flew over my head.

The astute Russians pounced down on Canton the moment he died, and increased those efforts at revolution. The astute Russians fired the first shot at Shameen, and the astute Russians thereupon proceeded to make a perfect bonfire of the Chinese, or any idea of "China for the Chinese." Three months later, viz., on August 18th, 1925, Canton started another British shipping ban. The Bolsheviks had stirred up Canton until her silk trade was almost lost. They had lectured her, cajoled her (both men and women Russian speakers had been at work), until Canton was delirious with her own grievances and her own importance.

Although exasperated almost beyond endurance, the British Navy, who landed here and there, were told *not*

to fire, and the British Navy did not fire. Her splendid men landed from their ships in their smart uniform and marched about, and the manner of their marching did much to restore order.

I suppose I'm a perfect fool, but I cannot understand why our home Government allows one insult after another to be heaped on her own subjects in China, and one insult followed another in China in quick succession. From May to August is nearly three months, and what have we done? We allowed the Chinese to print and re-print, talk and re-talk stories of Shanghai and Shameen (Canton) which our British Consuls, on the spot, have sworn are lies.

We allowed a position to grow so grave that British men, women and children had been recalled from mines, and agencies and up-country positions because they had become absolutely unsafe.

Our soldiers and sailors have been told not to fire. And they haven't. Things have gone from bad to worse, and to show the daring of the unchecked, rowdy student class, there is no blackmail they have not handled.

Why this dalliance at home?

Put into a nutshell China means—a vast land, a vast population.

No ruler since the death of the wonderful old Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi in 1908.

Endless bandits and outlaws who have risen to wealth and power and generalship. Each fighting his neighbour. None strong enough to take supreme rule.

The treasury empty.

Two men left prominently on the field of revolution. Chang Tso-lin, the War Lord of Mukden (Manchuria), in the N.E., and the "Christian General" Feng Yu-Hsiang, on the N.W., and two or three further south, of whom more anon.

The first was pro-foreigner. The "Christian" is anti-everything that is not Bolshevik. These two men were the rival aspirants for the rule of China.

In the South Canton is now openly and frankly Bolshevik, the fluffy little golden-haired later had helped that, and led by Russian officers, whose goal is to destroy the British Crown Colony of Hong-Kong, eighty miles down the same river.

Meantime, male and female students are still on strike,

schoolboys are on strike. Servants of foreigners are still kidnapped and intimidated and on strike; the Chinese police are obliged to fire on rioters at one of the cotton mills outside the Belgian Concession, and China is still in a state of unutterable disorder and chaos.

It is not political. It is not constructive. There is no real lasting plan mooted for the reconstruction and future of China. It is a war of grievance: a war of strike and strife, of discontent and rebellion, of Trades Union promises unfulfilled—of trying to take off one's coat to fight with no new coat ready to be put on, or any other coat at all for that matter.

China has no money, no initiative, not sufficient expert skill to exploit her great natural resources, but looked at dispassionately is a delightful picturesque place. One feels she is hundreds of years behind Europe, and that what she wants is not book learning, but practical teaching of farming, fruit-pruning, rotation of crops for her poor worn-out soil, and, above all, irrigation, and dykes to stop her yearly floods with their death roll and destruction. This year hardly had the misery of the Peking rains of July passed, when the great floods returned on the land. Fate is cruel to her poorer classes.

"Back to the land" should be inscribed on her banner—and railways and waterways should link up that land, and light and power, and factories should spring up and mines be worked. China is doing her best to destroy herself.

There are fine men in China, men of thought and learning. They are in the minority and seem unable to get a hearing, or exert any good influence at all. Every good thought counts. Every kindly action bears fruit—not to-day maybe, nor to-morrow, but the day after to-morrow. And it is worth while so to live one's life as to be able to look the world in the face, admitting one's follies (often unintentional), but feeling that one has never willingly done anyone harm, robbed anyone, cheated anyone, or indulged to selfish excess in any vice or habit. Every good life helps the world and benefits posterity. Every bad life leaves a stain.

China is going through indigestible over-education at the top, and so breeding disillusionment below. Both will pass. She is a great country and she has a great future. All luck to her—but she must walk before she can run. She must be taught before she can dictate.

The educated mother is sadly lacking in China. The women are dull. But one shudders to think of the kind of mothers these naughty schoolgirls will make. They seem to be devoid of everything practical. The returned student is an anomaly. Education beyond capacity is cruel. The Eastern is by nature a great lover of form and colour. He is a born artist, and a born craftsman.

He loves Nature. He appreciates the sky. Its sunrises, sunsets, moon, all appeal to him, and a tinge of the supernatural and sentimental lurks in the clouds as they pass overhead. The darkest skin has often a poetical soul. The poorest have their ideals. The Eastern is a fine character until he assumes ill-digested Western education, and then he possesses neither the good of East nor West, and becomes discontented and destructive, even down to the lowest grade. He now cries for the moon instead of worshipping her.

There is no caste prejudice in China—that is the curse of India superadded to its nine religions and 130 languages. In China one person is as good as another. Hence their politeness. Both parties abase their eyes when they bow, and stand motionless and respectful on leaving one another's presence.

Really these Chinese, 80 per cent. or 90 per cent. of whom cannot read or write, are a thousand times happier in their home lives and in their fields than the demi-semi-educated of Europe. Especially the country home, in which all the remote members of the family live (though not as bad as that family of 150 in Damascus), is a real home, a little insulated community in which every child is an asset the moment it becomes a wage earner at eight or ten.

Millions are struggling for rice or maize in the towns; but under stable government and with money to help them, China could employ her people and replant some of the world's greatest forests. Then perhaps these yearly floods and devastation and drownings might to some extent be mitigated.*

*While New Year's news of 1929 from China is to a great extent concerned with the reforms introduced by the Nanking Government and the new era that is setting in, the fact remains that the lot of the millions of agriculturists is now more miserable than it has ever before been in the history of China. During 1927 and 1928 Communist risings made life and property insecure. Successive lootings by troops have harried the peasantry, and

A few miles from Peking the people know nothing of politics, and most of them have never travelled those few miles to the city. Some have never been outside their own village. They have been building up their family life in contentment while the so-called civilized countries have been destroying it by divorces.

See that old farmer. His only vice shows in his eyes. He is an opium smoker; but he is good to his wife and concubines and endless children, and his sons' wives and daughters' husbands. They are all happy together in that farm yonder.

When the corn is ripe, every young or old member of the family is in the fields picking by hand each head from its stem. The heads are thrown into baskets and carried off by the stronger members to the farmstead. There, on a flooring of pressed clay, a donkey is walking round and round guided by a child of seven in little scarlet trousers, while a large stone rolls the corn from the husk. What does not come out is beaten out later by flails and thrown up into the air to separate the chaff from the wheat, even as it was in Bible times. The chaff gets blown away.

The grain is then put into a creaking old barrow and trundled into Peking, where it is sold on the market. The straw is stacked for the beasts in winter, when there are six months of cold as a contrast to the tropical heat of summer.

And there are ploughs with small oxen, or an ox and an ass, or an ass and a man, or a man or two women—but always ploughing and sowing and reaping. Up before the dawn and to bed after the light has gone is the general order of the countryside of China. A frugal, kindly, thrifty people. They are born on the land, live on the land, die on the land, and are universally clad in blue. The elements are their greatest scourge. This man has farmed in this primitive way like his forefathers—the whole

there is now not one Province in which there are not roving bands of robber-bandits who take advantage of the absence of any official hold on the country to pillage and kill the inhabitants at their own free will. Most of these bandits are ex-soldiers who have possessed themselves of arms and ammunition during their Army service. The Nationalist Government has so far shown no capacity whatever to suppress this scourge. Even in towns like Shanghai armed robberies are a daily occurrence, and the readiness to shoot a victim dead for the sake of a few dollars is a terrifying feature for which there is no remedy in sight.

uneducated but united family is happy. In the West he would have employed machinery, and his son would be serving behind a draper's counter in a black coat.

They have a quaint name for the Chinese coolie—Mailichi or, when literally translated, *seller of strength*, and, generally speaking, he is a kindly child. China is a non-alcoholic country, and I never saw anyone drunk in all those months, which included a winter and a summer visit.

In fact one was struck by their patience and industry and reasonableness. They work from morning to night and sing all the time; twelve hours make a coolie's usual day, and thirty cents his usual pay, but on that he keeps his wife and family. There is no starvation to speak of, but there is great frugality. They live chiefly on millet made into a sort of porridge, rice when they can afford it, fresh and salted vegetables, meat being taken rarely. They often live till sixty or seventy, once considered a high age in Europe; but now in England the age limit is increasing so rapidly through science in every form that we Britons all bid fair to live a century. Terrible idea.

The toiling Chinaman, one must admit, is not a fast worker. It takes three and a half Chinese to get through as much work in a mill as one Lancashire hand—so where does the scheme of equal pay come in? The labourer is worthy of his hire—if his work is proportioned to it.

Of course these were anxious days in China for everyone. All shipping was paralysed for a time, and 140,000 men, women and children were "officially" on strike at Shanghai alone. No one could make plans, because nothing was stable.

Matters were serious, and very serious.

The ordinary Chinese neither knew nor cared; but the froth was six inches taller than the beer below, and the froth frothed—and bubbled all over the glass and ran about everywhere. In the cities such government as existed was "determined" to keep order; but their soldiers are easily converted into bandits and they had not got their soldiers particularly well in hand, so the soldiers can be bought by whoever has the longest purse.

Everyone was kindness itself to me, constantly giving me advice not to go here or there, telegraphing suggestions for my welfare and mothering me generally. So I was very

good, and did as I was told, and did not often sit painting at places where I should not sit painting, and so avoided being the subject of any "International Complications." But it was an awful nuisance, and many a time I wanted to kick over the barrier and wander off to the wilds heedless of the kind advice.

At Tientsin were 3,000 troops, British, French, American and Japanese. Then at the Treaty Ports were International gunboats—both on sea and river; but only a few in comparison to the beat they ply.

Foreign business was paralysed. People shook their heads and said "the worst for 100 years." But it was not really worse than the anti-foreign rising of 1900, only the foreigners were more numerous, their interests vaster, and therefore, in proportion, the menace was much greater. And they were anxious, dangerous days for everyone. The Anti-Foreign hate was at its height.

Of course there is no stable government in Peking. Corruption and incompetency and foreign intrigue are difficult things for any government to deal with; but no one knows his China better than Mr. J. O. P. Bland, and this is what he said in July in the *Sunday Times* (London):

"I observed that the American Government's proposal to bring the Powers at the impending Tariff Revision Conference to a discussion of the question of extra-territoriality in China is partly a matter of domestic politics, and partly manœuvring for a position of advantage in the diplomatic field. As to domestic politics, Mr. Coolidge and his advisers may be assumed to understand their own business. If, however—as it would appear—the State Department's diplomatic purpose, in conciliating the student-cum-Bolshevist agitators, is to put an end to the anti-foreign movement throughout China, and thus to deprive Japan of a possible pretext for armed intervention, the manœuvre is likely to defeat its own object, and that very soon."

On August 8th, in large type appeared: "ALL THE BRITISH LEGATION SERVANTS HAVE WALKED OUT."

Whether they had left by intimidation or been kidnapped at the gates, the Legation servants again slipped back one by one. But only those who had been long in the service were reinstated, and plenty of other local servants offered themselves and clamoured for the vacated jobs. The engineers mended the telephone wires which had been cut, and got in order the pumps which had been shame-

fully maltreated before the exodus from the Power House, with the help of the ever useful and wonderful British Tommy; so that British initiative put right in double quick time the malicious damage that had been done to Power House, etc., by men who left in fear and haste.

The idea from outside was to stop not only the food and light, but the water supply of hundreds of Britishers, and upset seriously their drains—to imperil their lives, in fact. And that in days of tropical heat.

The number of strikers amounted to two hundred. The object of the strike was to "make the British Government realize their mistaken policy towards China." But the ladies of the Legation buckled to and worked hard and tried to forget the heat; in fact, the women "carried on," as they did in Hong-Kong, Canton and Swatow, where it lasted for months. In a few days the whole of our little colony was working as harmoniously as before. Thanks to pluck and enterprise.

On roth August things looked so serious we folk were again advised to pack—at any moment the hotel staff might walk out. It was not for want of placating they had not already done so, and every human foreign being who was not a necessity in Peking was advised to be ready to leave.

Chinese families in the country with money had ordered rooms in the Peking hotels, and, as had happened before, would have rushed in to the Legation Quarters with all their families and valuables and slept even in the passages for sheer safety. Besides swarming into the homes owned by Chinese in the Legation Quarters.

I packed. Students have just been to the hotel again to urge all hands to strike, and this is in Legation Quarter.

A Chinaman has just asked: "What England done for China?"

"Why, lots."

"Whatee lots?"

"England invented engines. Brought engines to China."

"Nobody tell me that."

"England brought big ships—lots machinery, cottons, heaps good things," I continued.

"Nobody tell me. Nobody tell me England do good things," and so on.

Why, once more, where is our propaganda? Good heavens, it's awful omission leads to such remarks as this.

It is interesting to note that even in this August month of embroilment there are signs in Peking of a turning against Moscow. In fact no one in the North had at first seemed to realize that Moscow was working up the student broil. Not until the Soviets had openly come out with speeches and propaganda in Canton at the end of June were people alive to the fact, and only three months later did they realize its full force and begin to be afraid.

Subtle ways are the power of the Russians. No one suspects them. They work below ground in the dark.

The impasse was at its height.

The fruits of the work done by M. Karakhan, Soviet Envoy at Peking, in inciting the Chinese to repudiate Foreign Treaties and to rise against foreigners, were beginning at this time to ripen. Anti-foreign hatred steadily increased, and the flame lit by the shooting of some student rioters in Shanghai spread all over China, especially in the Treaty Ports.

Chinese Nationalism sprang into active life during the time of my visit and has since involved the country in prolonged civil warfare, which has interfered with trade and has brought ruin and distress to millions of peaceloving and industrious Chinese. In 1927 and 1928 over one and a half million poverty-stricken and starving Chinese farmers and their families quitted their homes in the province of Shantung and trekked North to Manchuria. From every quarter, missionaries have had to fly for their lives, their hospitals and premises being occupied by troops. Bandits have sprung up in innumerable hordes, and prosperous Concessions, such as at Hankow, Kinkiang and Chinkiang in the Yangtze valley, have been invaded and brought to a low ebb.

The Nanking outrage was accepted by the Powers as a regrettable occurrence, and not until over a year had elapsed was Great Britain able to effect an agreement on lines which have given only a moderate amount of satisfaction.

Though the blame for all this trouble lies largely at Moscow's door, Bolshevism to-day stands discredited on the Far East, and many Chinese Communists have lost their lives. Even figureheads like Madame Sun Yat Sen, who went to Moscow to make herself *au fait* with Soviet tenets, have returned disheartened and disillusioned, and the notorious and treacherous so-called "Christian" General Feng Yu Hsiang, who also went to Moscow, has since thrown off his allegiance to Russia, a most ungrateful proceeding after all the munitions, arms and money furnished to him by his Slav mentors.

But in this great land of topsy-turveydom, comedy and tragedy are ever rife, and so I must content myself with these few general observations. I find great difficulty in making deductions or predictions for continually is it the case in China more than any other country that it is the unexpected that happens.

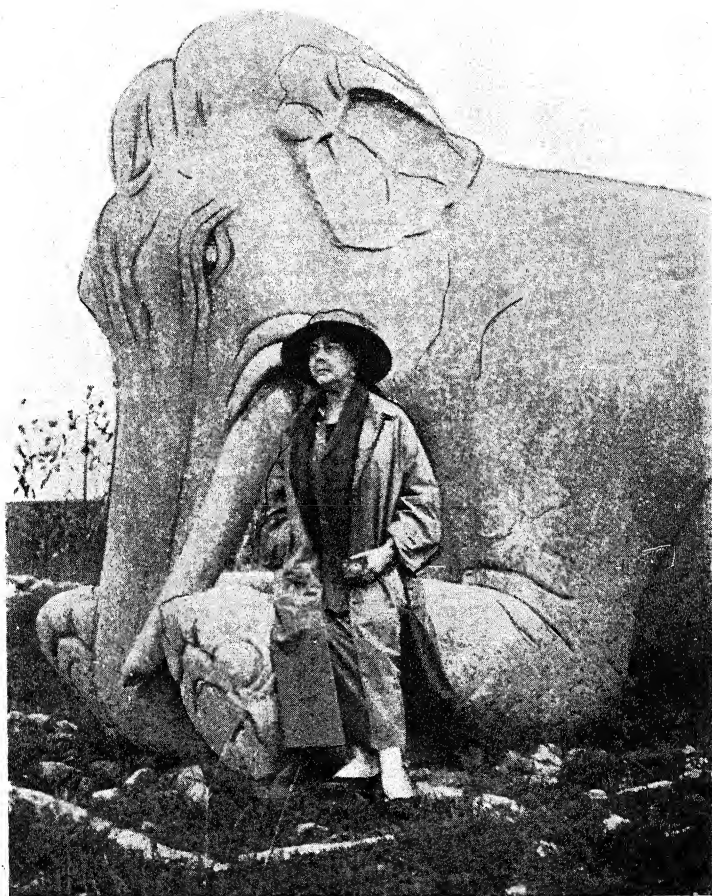
Quite recently there have been growing signs of war weariness,

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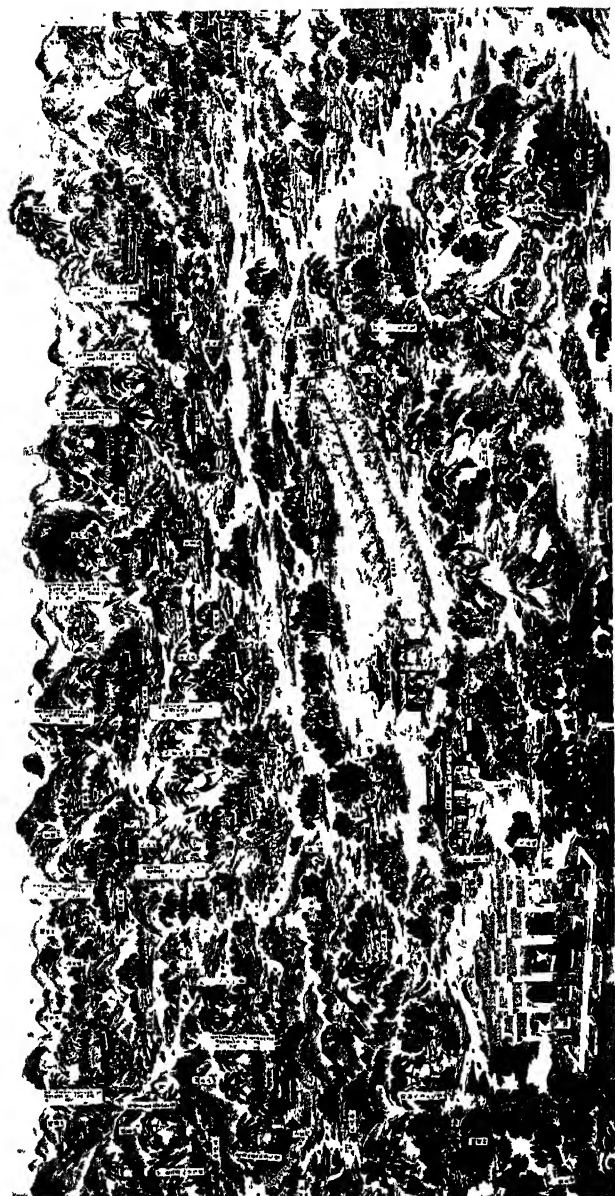
no doubt aided by the emptiness of the Treasury coffers. The Nationalists are searching for some method of fostering industry, and it is gratifying to note that our politico-commercial interests are now being helped by a swing of the pendulum in favour of resumption of more friendly relations with the British Empire.

Perchance China is awakening to the futility of Nationalism. Nationalisation of shipping, for instance, spelt failure in America, Canada and Australia. Germany abandoned State ownership of mines, and Belgium found the Government running of railways brought disaster.

But Sun Yat Sen's will had laid down the lines for a Nationalist Government, and along those lines Nanking followed in '29, as the only way to reduce armies and get peace; but the coffers were almost bankrupt, and the chances of peaceful success seemed small indeed.



The Author in the Animal Avenue at the Ming Tombs, near the Great Wall of Northern China, September, 1925.



The Tombs of the Ming Dynasty, Nankow, North China.

1. Marble Pailon or Gate.
2. Animal Avenue.
3. The last Great Tomb.

From an old Chinese Drawing of the Ming Tombs.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MING TOMBS AND THE GREAT WALL

First Chinese railway—A funny little train; tucked away into palanquins—Twenty-two miles jog-trot with four bearers—Wonderful cultivation—Crossing quickly-rushing streams at jog trot—Stepping stones insecure—Bearers like human cats—Habit a wonderful thing: their calls and jokes, and cheery smiles—Every form of agriculture—Avenues of enormous stone animals—Great Ming Tombs rifled later—The triumphal way—Five centuries of worship—A marvellous day and great experience—The Great Wall—First impression—Prodigious! stupendous!; nothing like it—Once three thousand miles of marvel—Twenty feet high and twenty feet wide—A letter received on the Great Wall—One of the most interesting days of my life—A camel-train from Mongolia—Dear old Amah's industry.

WHEN one has heard a great deal about anything one is always prone to disappointment. Subconsciously one builds up some sort of mystic impossibility, and reality often does not reach the building's first story. For months I had waited for this Chance. It came. But only if we made up a small party to protect one another, and started at once while there was a lull.

On this occasion reality far surpassed anticipation. In all my long travels I cannot remember two days that interested or pleased me more—two days utterly unlike and totally original in themselves.

In 1911 the Chinese built their first *Chinese* railway. English and French had helped them with money and engineers in all their great lines, but they had learnt by experience, and started off with their own engineers to build in their own way. That line runs straight from Peking to the North-West into Mongolia, and throwing aside the idea of climbing a mountain in a series of zigzags, the Chinaman thought he knew better than anyone else, and would build his line straight.

From Peking to Kalgan is only eighty miles. The route crosses a high mountain range, along the summit of which is the Great Wall of China—dives into tunnels, but always runs up hill straight. It is excellently laid, this narrow-gauge railway; there is plenty of stone ballast to keep the

sleepers in place and dust out of the way, and the Chinese have every reason to be proud of their workmanship and the line's ten-mile-an-hour transport.

When they had finished the rails, however, they found no locomotive could drag even a small train straight up such a gradient. That was a bit of a snag their engineers had not bargained for at such a gradient and was the direct result of their having failed to accept the advice of foreign engineers who strongly advised a circuitous route which would result in a much more gentle gradient with lower costs of working the line. Accordingly the strongest locomotives America could produce (such as are used in the Rockies) had to be procured, and even these engines jibbed. The difficulty was solved by putting the horse behind the cart, and with the engine pushing the little train from behind instead of dragging it from the front, all went well, and in such fashion one ascends the route.

We sat in the front of that funny little train with its engine pushing behind

Camp-stools were ranged outside the coach, and we were propelled through the pass—nothing very remarkable about the Nankou Pass itself—and went head first into the darkness of the tunnels. The train was flagged as it puffed and grunted up the mountainside; each man could signal with his green flag to the next man, who was in sight, and on we went. We were very near anti-foreign war in China that day, and yet one's heart did not quake as it did with green lamp-flaggings in Siberia.

Eight trains moved up and down per diem, but a first-class coach is a rarity.

Along the track at the side we passed a camel train from Mongolia; tiny donkeys laden with large tubs of oil from the hills, and some horned cattle. Also heaps of goat herds comprising very small beasts of every colour and shade, and large rams with horns so doubled and twisted they could do no harm.

In an hour and a half across the plains from Peking, we reached Nankou, a little northern town with only one modern building, to wit, the Station Hotel. This is quite a clean, comfortable little hostelry, with excellent cooking and an over-abundance of mosquitoes in the summer months.

Within a few minutes of arrival our little party of five were tucked away into chairs or palanquins, and ready

to be carried eleven miles without a road ; over dried water-courses, or over flowing streams, up steep inclines till one felt like tumbling backwards, or down amazing drops until we had to hold on hard to remain seated at all.

The palanquin, or chair, is really a wicker chair with flat arms and a back. It is supported on two long poles, and four men in single file carry the chair by bearing the poles on their shoulders. They are heavy poles too. Everything is heavy in China, from candlesticks to tables, from chairs to coffins.

From this it will be seen that one hangs suspended in the chair, and with every movement of those four men one gently sways up and down.

The chair and its tackle must weigh far more than the individual, so take nine or ten stone as an average person, and double that weight with food baskets and coats and kodaks, and you will realize these men carry a heavy burden on their four unpadded shoulders.

Now comes the marvel.

I felt almost sick to conceive those four men—a human caravan—were to bear me twice eleven miles. It seemed horrible to think of. It seemed cruel and base, and quite disturbed the prospective pleasure of the day. But I soon got over that when the guide told me they did it every day—if there were passengers—and clamoured for the job ; that they earned four times as much as in the fields where they would otherwise be at work, and were quite annoyed that no one in the party of five was heavy enough to require a spare man.

About every two hundred steps, on bad surface, and what seemed to a lay mind totally impossible in parts, they changed shoulders every minute and a half. On a better stretch they changed at two and a half, and occasionally, but very occasionally, at three minutes. On all the eleven miles they halted twice for five minutes, had a pipe or a drink of water from a well and on we went again.

There and back, twenty-two miles of jog-trot we accomplished that day, and our average speed was nearly four miles an hour ; and most amazing of all, these twenty men came in as fresh at seven o'clock in the evening as they had been when they left at 10 a.m. on the arrival of our train.

Habit is a wonderful thing. The front man gave the order to change shoulders. *Wa* or *Augh* was his queer cry, and all four changed at once without stopping for more than a second, while the palanquin was supported on two solid sticks brought for the purpose and always hanging between each pair of men.

The first man always calls out to tell those behind such things as: an incline, a hole, stones, a dip down, a steep descent, and often makes jokes about these little incidents of the route. A cheery jolly lot were they.

It was quaint, indeed, to hear No. 1 call *Wa*, followed instantly by No. 2—then No. 3—and so on—as we proceeded in single file on that wondrous day's trip.

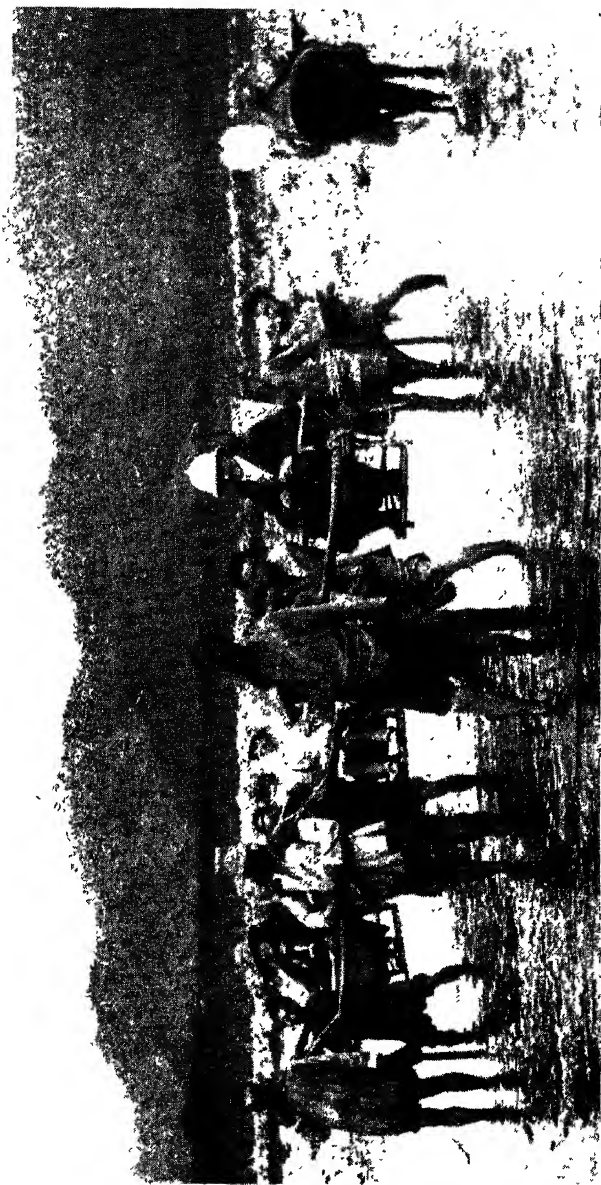
And while these delightful bearers at the great burial-place of Kings and the former fortress and fortification of China smiled and showed a vivid row of teeth on the gift of a cake, picked wild flowers and presented me with them because they had seen me stop and get one—while these happy children of the mountains lived a natural life with nature—civil war was already breaking out in Canton. Tired of killing British, Japanese, French and Americans, for a change they had taken to killing one another—and this was on a far larger and more dangerous scale.

Civil war began again that very hour, strange as it seemed to realize such a thing in the peaceful quiet solitude of that wonderful day.

Here and there an isolated village, surrounded by a high mud wall, reminded me of Mexico or Egypt, or India or Syria. One saw pigs, or herds of goats, or donkeys, but never a cow or a horse.

Wonderful cultivation was in evidence, and hand ploughing, and Kaoliang (grain), ten or twelve feet high, looked rather like papyrus on the Nile with its fluffy seeds at the top. Maize, turnips, marrows, egg plants of huge size, tobacco, pea-nuts, all were there. All were good crops, for the torrential rains were only just over, and the land gave forth in plenty; and yet in spite of the heat that early September day, two months more would see snow, and this northern semi-tropical land would become almost arctic for three or, perchance, five months in a long winter season. So great had the rains been that I had waited week by week to go this trip at all.

It was really a very interesting ride, drive, carry, jog-



Returning from the Ming Tombs, near the Great Wall, Northern China. Left : Mrs. Alec Tweedie, Monsieur Brossel, Mr. and Mrs. Agnew.



The Great Wall of China was about 1,400 miles long, has endless gates and towers (often only 100 yards apart). It is 20 feet high and 20 feet thick, built of granite quarter-ton blocks. Started 200 B.C. History records a million people built one stretch in 10 days and 60 per cent. of them died at the job. Mongolia on the right. China on the left.

trot, or whatever word one would apply to a chair-line of human freight.

All our men had pigtails, but as they got in the way when slipping the pole from shoulder to shoulder, one by one, they bound them round the head and tucked in the ends without hairpins, and there they remained. They were a happy lot and chatted to one another most of the day. Alas, and alack, I could not chat to them. What a fool one does feel in a land where one cannot talk.

At one place we had to get out of our chairs and cross on stepping-stone over a quickly-rushing stream about two feet deep, and the stepping-stones none too secure.

Twice I felt it was impossible for those men to circumnavigate rocks and boulders in this endless track. I held my breath—held on tight—and yes, they did it. Wonderful—wonderful sure-footedness and unison of strength.

Just contrast the strength of these Chinese bearers, all comparatively small men, who ran twenty-two miles most days and carried my ten stone and all the lunch baskets and coats and the chair itself and were not tired, with our civilization that will soon be unable to carry its own weight on its own legs for two miles.

Motors are robbing nations of the use of their legs.

My bearers were like human cats, and if all four did not work in unison their passenger would have had a bad time; but so completely in unison is their movement that at the weird call "Wa" all move together, and one scarcely ever misses that comfortable swing-swing of the chair even when it is standing almost on end and one is holding on tight not to slip out. Twice our men took off their home-made felt shoes with basket soles, and unbound their feet and rolled up their trousers to carry us across rushing rivers. The feet are bound, the binding being a less troublesome and costly affair than stockings in China. And always they chatted and laughed with one another. Again one pondered and wondered if the child of nature was not a happier mortal than the ill-educated student who had picked up all the bad of the West, and none of the good of civilized, or so-called civilized, Education?

Let us teach them sanitation instead of Education. Irrigation instead of irritation. Contentment instead of revolution. These peasants both in and out of the towns

are happy people. What right have we to interfere with that happiness? They have peace and joy, and we have neither.

After nearly two hours, every moment of which had brought fresh interest, we stood before the great marble Pailou, or gateway, leading to the Ming Tombs.

Superstition ruled the world thousands of years ago, and superstition plays a great part in many human lives to-day, especially among the coloured races. There is still a habit in China of putting a little mud wall to the north of a grave, which wall is to protect the dead from the evil spirits that descend from the north. The great Ming Tombs lie in a sort of horseshoe of mountains, so they are well bounded in the north by a fine natural barrier against those unholy bad devils.

Great rulers, whether in Egypt, India, or China, built their own tombs in their lifetime, and spent so much money and time in the erection of their death palace-houses that we have inherited wonderful buildings and arts and crafts from the dead of yore.

Tut-ankh-Amen died as a boy. He had not had time to erect his tomb in the Valley of the Kings near Luxor; hence he lies in no fine mausoleum, but merely a warehouse into which all his furniture and treasures were thrust until such time as a suitable grave could be erected. His wife quickly married again, and so, after 3,500 years, he was found still waiting by Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Carter in 1923.

The similarity of superstition, religion and burial of India, Egypt and China is remarkable. Each Emperor prepared his own tomb. To the next world either human sacrifice or effigy had to accompany him. All have figures or paintings or emblems of some sort to that end in their death chambers.

At the Ming Tombs there is a long avenue of enormous animals in solid stone, brought from eighty miles away. Some are standing at attention, others are lying down to rest. They comprise camels, elephants, horses and lions, and several weird creatures that are nameless. How did they get those solid weights transported and planted along the Avenue? The Pyramids of Egypt are of colossal stones brought hundreds of miles by water. And we think we are "educated," that we are so advanced and clever, such engineers and explorers, so artistic and

wonderful—until we travel and see what others have done before us, and what monuments of their civilization they have left behind.

The Triumphal Way is nearly a mile long, and there are thirty-six animals of colossal size, twelve or thirteen feet high, or warriors and statesmen nine feet high, to guard its sides.

The entrance to the Temple of Karnak at Luxor—another of the world's marvels, by the by—is guarded by a similar though much smaller line of animals.

It would be tiring to go into all the details. This is no guide book, but there are eleven tombs at the end of this long trail, all more or less alike. Days would be required to visit more than one, for that one takes some hours—and that one was built in 1424 by the man who founded modern Peking—by name Yung Loh.

Here, after five centuries, the descendants worship on fête days at the Ming Tombs of their ancestors.

There are the wooden bowls for offerings, the candlesticks, the vases for joss-sticks (incense), the cups of sacrifice, and always the "tablets" (of memory) of carved wood upon the altar.*

The Ming dynasty fell in 1644, and then came his Manchus. The Manchu boy Emperor passed out from the Forbidden City walls in November, 1924—and that ended the Manchus.

Unfortunately, there is nowhere to stop at the Ming Tombs, and it is necessary to do the three hours' trail back to Nankou before dark, as the stony track—there is no road—would be impossible for the bearers after dark. I would have loved to spend a week amid those wild, weird, beautiful surroundings, with a tent and camp fitments; but the country was a bit disturbed and everyone had shaken his head at the bare suggestion.

*The inconceivable happened when China, with her sacred ancestor worship, actually rifled and desecrated her Ming Tombs in 1928. Who could have instigated such an outrage? Was it Russia? The Empress Dowager was known as the "Old Buddha," and her coffin was literally packed with jewels and wealth of every kind. A mattress seven inches thick of gold, interwoven with embroidery of pearls with a large figure of Buddha woven in pearls, jade ornaments resembling lotus leaves. She was dressed in her great ceremonial robes, her body encircled nine times by ropes of pearls. The value was six or eight million pounds. She was disintombed, robbed, and left lying on the wet ground.

Alas and alack, tragedy lies at the Ming Tombs. Like everything else, like every other historic monument, they are falling to pieces. China, although full of natural wealth, has no government—a government that does not govern is a menace in any land. The only organizations that pay are guided by a couple of Englishmen, Sir Francis Aglen, of Customs, and Sir Ernest Wilton, of Salt. They have infused some sort of honesty and respect into their jobs. The shareholders, or rather bondholders, are paid, the railway and other officials are paid, and the surplus, which is a very large surplus, handed over to the Chinese Government to be swallowed up—not on the restoration of the Ming or other tombs, but just—well—swallowed up.

No one looks after the treasures of the past. It is nobody's job. Nobody has money to spend. The yearly rains destroy, and no man replaces. This year's rains were heavy. Moss and even trees were growing on the roofs, the great weight had dislodged the Royal yellow tiles, they are lying thick and broken upon the ground; destruction is everywhere, the roofs leak, and with a decade more of neglect the Temples themselves will be in ruins both inside and out.

Verily a calamity.

Such buildings are a legacy from the past. It is cruel neglect for the present to let them decay.

I look back on that day at the Ming Tombs as one of the most interesting in my somewhat interesting life.

Yes, these mountains make a fine natural horse-shoe for keeping off the evil spirits.

Hundreds of miles further south, between Tientsin and Nanking on the great Yangtse, are thousands and tens of thousands of poor little graves, mere mounds; but constantly there is a little mud wall, only two or three inches high perhaps, to the north to keep away the same evil genii the Chinese fear so badly. Here it is natural and grand, but the idea is the same.

Before great temples or palaces are screens for the same purpose. A fine wall, even a marble or carved wall stands in front of the entrance, not to hide the entrance as we might suppose, but to stop the direct entry of any spirits of harm, or evil. No spirit can get round a corner.

Just the same idea prevails in the abundance of red.

Red is a protection. Red hangs from the shop doors or lamps or poles—red covers the children. If they are naked, a bit of red ties up their curiously screwed up hair, or a red cord hangs round their necks or their tummies.

The Bridal, too, is red for luck—the wedding procession is mostly red—just as the funeral procession is mostly white, although the coffin poles and pall are red. Long may these superstitions last—they are the real relics of the real past of China, which is, alas, assuming that cosmopolitan hideousness that is overspreading the world, and goes by that misapplied name—civilization.

In China the villages are minor walled cities, walled with mud this time, but quite feudal in their ways. Modern commerce has been taught them by the foreigner, who in turn has copied their idea of a little quarter for himself called a Reservation, where he feels as safe as the Chinaman feels safe in his mud-walled village or his stone-walled city.

But the poor little villager is taxed and squeezed to support armies of a million and a half of men, and as he can't, he simply can't, he cultivates the poppy and sells the opium from which that army of a million and a half under three generals is clothed and fed.

And while I moralize and travel from north to south I am passing an agricultural populace who speak different dialects and almost different tongues. The whole are by blood totally different the one from the other, just as different really as Europe. One might also say the United States, as so many languages are spoken in America that whole districts cannot understand one another.

The Great Wall of China.

One word and one word only sums up that scene. Prodigious.

It is said the first Emperor employed 700,000 prisoners of war to build his part of it.

It is also recorded that, later, a long section of the wall was built in ten days by a million men—and that 60 per cent. died at their task.

The granite blocks weigh a quarter of a ton each, and miles of the wall bound the summits of a mountain range at a height of 2,060 feet.

Prodigious.

It is 20 feet high and 20 feet wide, with large square setts to walk on, and in China proper runs for 1,400 miles, with

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endless block houses and towers and gates. At important sites these extra buildings are only 100 yards apart.

The total length runs almost to 3,000 miles up hill and down dale. In some places it is almost perpendicular, and the top is reached by huge steps of solid stone. There it has stood for 2,000 years—a barrier to protect China from the inroads of Mongols, Tartars, Turks and Tibetans.

Prodigious.

There is nothing in the world like it in the form of human endeavour. Even the Pyramids of Egypt took neither so long to build nor cost so many lives. And yet, after all, the wall proved a failure. Bows and arrows did not shoot far, elaborate beacon fires announced in ample time the whereabouts of the enemy; and the colossal defensive wall was greater in its length and strength than its capacity for any human use, as its garrison invariably went out to meet the enemy.

Neglect at one point cost the Chinese people an Empire, and the great Mongol leader galloped through into the plains of Chihli hundreds of miles further south.

Reiteration sounds feeble. Let us change the word as we stand dumbfounded before the vast, strange structure, and call the GREAT WALL STUPENDOUS.

Begun in 214 B.C. by Shih Hwang Tî, the wall runs through China from North to South, having many offshoots, and often for miles a lower wall than the one on the crest. One can only gasp as one looks at it. Through its thousands and ten thousands of loopholes the bowmen used to shoot at the great descending hordes of Mongolians and Tartars.

This Great Wall of the Mings, one should add, symbolized the mutual exclusion between Manchuria and the Southern Chinese provinces until, in 1644, the barrier was broken by the capitulation of the Dragon Throne to the Manchus, and the Chinese burst in a torrent upon Manchuria.

Our journey to the wall was made by train from Nankou, where we had spent the night at the nice little hotel—nice if we had not been devoured by mosquitos—standing in a dear little old-world Chinese village.

The train in the morning was only third-class, so we took the first carriage and sat ourselves down at its open-back,

which made a sort of "observatory." As the engine pushed from behind, instead of pulling up that great grade from before, we had a fine view—the Nankou pass is nothing remarkable but quite interesting in its quiet way. At Chinglungchiao we descended and let the train puff on to Kalgan in Mongolia.

Twenty minutes walk they say to the foot of the wall were we ascend. I preferred a palanquin—those who walked straight up that first part were sorry they had not done the same, poor things.

Prodigious. Yes, prodigious. Maybe a couple of million men had been employed to produce this sight—and maybe a million had died at the job. Who knows.

And there among all the signs of human toil and sacrifice, flowers abounded. Beautiful wild flowers in profusion nestled on the hillsides, or grew in the foundations of the wall.

First surprise—purple blue gentian, a flower reminiscent of the Alps and Savoy.

Wild Michaelmas daisies, reminders of autumn days amid the scarlet and golden foliage of Canada or New England.

Common white daisies, bluebells, harebells, dandelions, small pink foxgloves, wild thyme, lords and ladies, convolvuli, reminiscent of England, and yet this was exactly half round the world from London. And hovering above these were small yellow butterflies, just the common yellow butterflies we all know so well.

All was so countrified and peaceful amid those sharp-peaked mountains reminiscent of Korea, and odd stones of many coloured granites and marbles, both pink and white and grey, and often so layered as to look like vast sweetmeats. The sky was blue. The sun was hot. The toil to the top was most exhausting, for it takes some thirty minutes stiff going and lengthy strides to clamber up to the highest tower, from where bearers or donkeys are left behind. Not quite such a steep climb as up the Pyramids; but the stairway is broken, and the stretches burst tight skirts, and mean strained and tired muscles after the climb up or down—both equally bad.

As we climbed, China was on our left and Mongolia on our right. The latter does not now come right up to the wall; but Kalgan is only a few miles distant, and Urga lies beyond. One pauses for breath and to admire the

panorama of peaks, and the wide stretch below on the right, which was so flat it seemed like a lake.

At this far point was an observation tower with six windows and two doors—the roof had gone—but the doors showed where their portcullis had been dropped from above as in the ancient castles of Europe, and where the wooden bar had passed from side to side on the inner side.

Lo! upon the walls long sentences were painted in black in quaint English. Truly a delightful welcome.

"British here are worse than dogs."

"You uncivilized Japs and British, go to your mangers to meditate."

"Britishers and dogs are not allowed to visit . . . (several words we could not read) by the iron hearted." SHOOT TO KILL ;—by order of British rascals trained and educated our children to remember and understand this by the iron-hearted."

The last sentence was pregnant with suggestion. Everywhere in Russia there are taxes for children. "Children make an Empire—these children will rule later—etc., etc." Here was the same suggestion. The children stunt had evidently been inspired from Russia. A Chinaman, on the other hand, would have spoken of his ancestors, whom he must not disgrace.

And the whole idea of besmirching a wall had also come from Russia, where we had seen poor Chopin's name defiled.

The Christian Feng was good enough at this time of the stunt to declare his anti-British views to Dr. Hagemann, the special correspondent of the *Germania* :

"We want to break the economic backbone of England in China," said Feng genially, "and sooner or later we shall achieve this aim . . ."

Consider the combined venom of Feng's statements and those inscriptions on the wall. Russia out to destroy the British Empire, which she acknowledges the most forceful power, and here on the wall these vile insults. We could almost see Kalgan, where dwells that Soviet tool the so-called "Christian" Marshal, whose soldiers with revolvers and umbrellas were everywhere, and whose trainloads of motor-cars, going up to Mongolia for his generals and Soviet allies, we passed in our train on the return journey to Peking.

A strange union. Russia, decrying all religion, allied to a "Christian" traitor who marches his soldiers to battle singing English hymns, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" being their battle march interspersed with Moody and Sankey.

China is one vast topsy-turvy opera. That would be merely amusing; but, alas, the hundreds of millions are suffering for the vagaries of the thousands. And while we gazed on those ridiculous words on the wall, thousands of miles away the people of the South of China were already turning against their Soviet leaders. Fresh trouble had begun at Canton and Shanghai. Big trouble too.

When we arrived at the fine gate at the wall, one of my bearers, a man of about fifty, was handed a letter. He squatted on his heels, tore it open and read it aloud to the mixed collection of Chinese and Mongolian coolies, who seemed much interested. Evidently the funny old man could read.

By signs and nods I made him understand I would like the envelope. Verily, an envelope addressed to the Great Wall of China was a novelty. He seemed quite flattered. Roughly translated it said:

1st line. "This letter is addressed to the Railway station of Chinglungchiao Bridge."

2nd line. Beginning again at the top: "Please hand this letter to Mr. Wang Ping and ask him to transport the letter to—"

3rd line. "To Mr. Yung Sheng to open it."

4th line. "This letter comes from the railway Station of Ta Tung of the Province of Shansi."

On the back, below the stamp, it says:

"This letter is closed on the 10 day of the 7th month."
(Only two days before.) Chinese date.

He refused to be paid for it, so finally we compromised by my buying some quaint Mongolian buttons, rather like white beer tubs, an inch long and two inches round, covered with queer hieroglyphics carved on the bone.

It is quite wonderful how friendly and understanding one can become with people to whom one cannot really say a single word. This is particularly applicable to China, where the average person is most kindly disposed.

Their quickness at understanding is often as surprising as their dexterity at fastening things without buttons or

string by merely tucking them in, in such a way that they do not tuck themselves out.

It was with deep regrets one turned one's back on the Ming Tombs and Great Wall.

It had taken 6 months to be safe enough to venture.

Working away in her corner sat Amah, while I scribbled for some hours my account of the Ming Tombs and the Wall.

Suddenly I realized the dear old thing was very quiet. I got up to look. The bottom was nearly off the sole of a stocking in which I had scrambled up that precipitous incline. If that dear old body had not solemnly sat down to darn and darn, and darn and darn until she had almost worked an entire new sole on that ridiculous stocking.

"No, no," I said. "No, no, Amah."

But that did not deter her. On she went.

"No, no, Amah—no goodee goodee."

She smiled, but still pursued her way.

What was I to do to stop her wasting a further hour on a stocking which when re-soled must be impossible to wear?

After many weeks our vocabulary had slightly expanded, so I shook my head, patted the stocking and said:

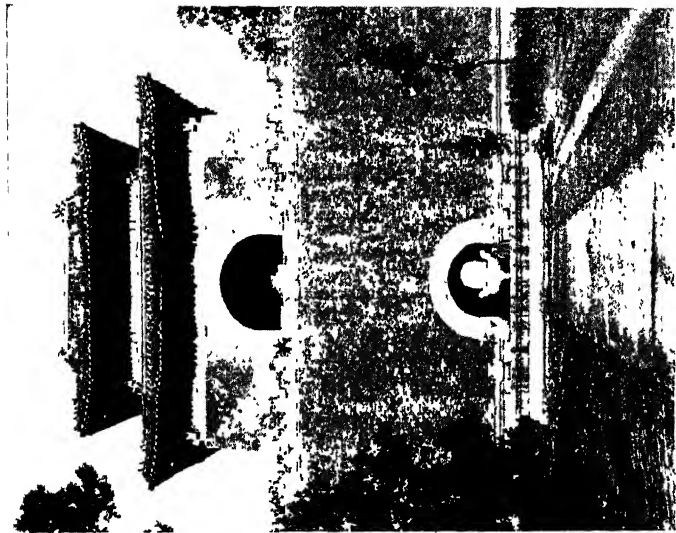
"No, no—naughty, naughty."

This sent her off into peals of laughter; because when she did anything nicely, I used to say:

"Good Amah," and when she did anything badly, I said, "Naughty Amah"—a term often applied to "naughty mosquito," when she would drop her little shoes, jump up on the bed under the mosquito net and clap her little hands. Then she jumped down again and showed me the spot of blood of her prey.

"Naughty, naughty," settled the stocking after one hour of toil had been expended upon the almost worthless thing.

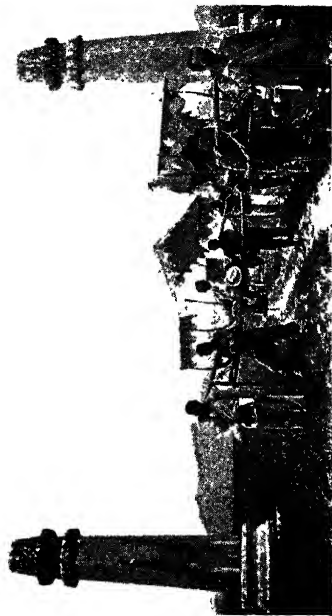
Amah was nothing if not thorough. She was representative of China and her class.



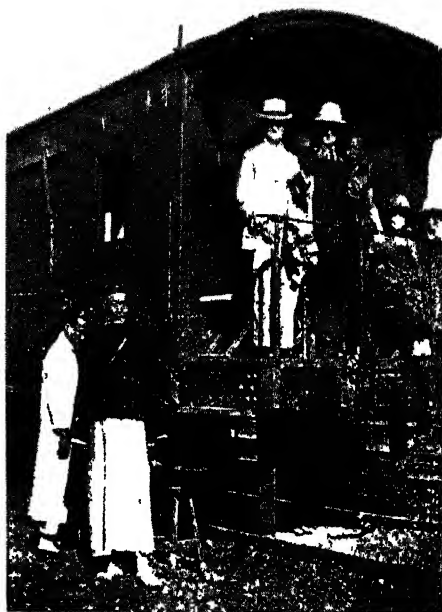
The Ming Tombs, Northern China.



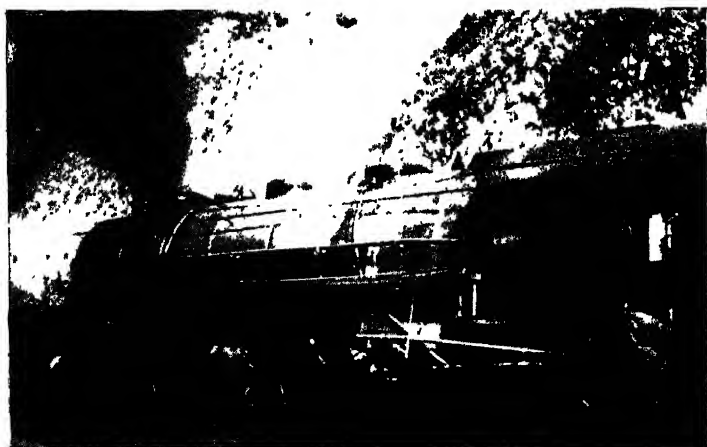
Pebbly path over which the palanquins were carried 22 miles in five-and-a-half hours by four men apiece.



Our chair halt.



Improvised "Observation Car."



Off from Nancou to the Great Wall. Our train before, and behind the heavy American Engine.

CHAPTER XIX

STRANGE FUNERAL RITES

Burial in the Land of the Dragon—Ancestry counts—The enormous wooden coffin—Scattering of paper to propitiate the Spirits—Mourners hired to make a noise—Fifteen inches of rain in a week—Incantation by priests or monks—Buddhist bibles much read—Three classes of paid mourners—Umbrellas and paper boats burned before the door—Hold-up for a funeral to pass—Procession three miles long—The astrologers fix everything—Traditional make-believe still popular—It takes a long time to be buried—Tradition an amazing chain of solid links—The young wife is ruled; she, in her turn, rules her son's wife—Historical costumes and ceremonies should be encouraged—Cremation—The poor man's sacrifice of his fingers to bury his father—Replicas of the deceased's belongings, clothes, piano, motor car, all burnt up in one blaze as the sun is setting.

CHINA'S love of funerals is amazing. Everyone wants a grander funeral than he can afford. Many of the rich prepare their own obsequies like the Egyptians of yore; make their tombs and order their coffins. If not, then the most praiseworthy thing a son can do is to provide substantial coffins for his parents.

A funeral was expensive in England and hilarious in Scotland till the last fifty years. Both are sobered down. China, however, still loves a funeral as much as ever; but then China is still in the Middle Ages.*

Nothing is more interesting in the Land of the Dragon than a burial. But then a funeral is interesting everywhere, for it shows the mentality and education of the people. Personally I have never seen so many in my life as pass the great hotels in Cairo every day. Some are grand, some are plain. Sometimes there are women, sometimes there are none. Sometimes there is wailing, sometimes singing. But the evolution of modern Egypt

*One of the latest activities of the Nationalist Government is to issue an Order limiting the expenditure on funerals and abolishing the pomp and circumstance of them. The people are irritated at being told they are no longer to employ monks to intone Buddhist lamentations, and the variegated picturesque garments worn by the coffin bearers and the carriers of symbols and honorific tablets are also to be abolished on the ground that they are a relic of Imperial times.

with its attempt of self-Independence still retains much of the pageantry and joy of showy obsequies, yet is quite a simple thing—compared to that of China, with its life-sized spotted cardboard horses, and its ceaseless, endless, extraordinary offerings. Fancy a procession struggling along three miles—yet such length happens when a great person dies.

Truly a funeral in China is still a very great affair. The moment the life has left the body the soul ascends to the realms of its ancestry and must be revered and respected, aye, and worshipped, as one more member of the family gone to join its thousands of years of forbears.

Like the Indian, the Chinaman, the very poorest Chinaman, may have a wondrous ancestry behind him. His veins may be tingling with the bluest blood. To him, the *nouveau riche* who cannot show his ancestors' tombs, who cannot produce his family tree, who is unable to worship once a year at his fifty-times-back-grandfather's grave, is a poor thing, a creature of no count. Money counts for as little in China as it counts for much in the Americas. Ancestry counts for as much in China as it is craved for by some newer lands. The one is ultra ancient. The other is ultra modern.

I chanced on a wonderful funeral in Canton in Southern China. Just as the ancient Egyptians buried their families with food and drink to help their spirits to the other world so to-day the Chinese carry their offerings in the funeral procession.

1. First of all came the ROAST PIG.

It was contained in a blue canopy. Quite a big affair. Big enough in fact for a person to sit cross-legged. A sort of palanquin. The palanquin of the roast pig. Two long poles ran down either side and at the four ends were four bearers dressed in blue.

2: Then followed the drink department. The palanquin of the SAMSHU. This was an equally important emblem, although the palanquin was a different colour and the four men were in different garb.

3. Most important of all came the coffin. Not a coffin like a lead coffin or thin wooden one in Europe, but a long box made out of solidly cut trunks of solid trees, more like a dug-out canoe with a massive top. It was a tremendously heavy affair and required eight or twelve men to carry it, and it was covered with flowers. That

these coffins should be solid is of vast importance, for it is of constant occurrence that a person is laid to rest in his coffin and there remains unburied for five years, until in fact there is room in the cemetery, or his relatives are rich enough to buy a plot of land to put him in. In Canton there is a regular place for these coffins to stand in rows, known as the City of the Dead. There are hundreds of them waiting on shelves, or in houses specially built for them, all duly labelled and marked, reposing like wine bottles in a cellar side by side until the eventful day comes when they can be properly consigned to Mother Earth. Besides the coffins, or before them, they lay the votive offerings as of yore in ancient Egypt.

4. The EMPTY CHAIR. Aye, that was the most pathetic part of the whole funeral. The empty chair told its own tale. The man was dead. The chair was no longer occupied. His son would take his place. He would become the head of the family. He would be all-powerful in his own circle, but for that day no one had usurped the father's place, and for that day all honour was done to the empty chair.

It is quite an ordinary thing for a man to run in front of a funeral scattering little bits of white paper. In Peking they are cut in circles and thrown up in the air most cleverly. There is nothing on them. They are small pieces of white paper cut into the size and shape of a little bank-note, but he scatters them as they represent "cash," the idea being that he throws money to appease the spirits and buy the way for the dead to pass unmolested. In fact he paves the way to heaven with gold.

The Chinese funeral has its hired mourners exactly the same as we used to have hired mourners in Great Britain a few years ago; for I still remember as a little girl seeing a hearse followed by men in wide black shiny suits, each carrying a black wand in his black-gloved hand, while a large piece of black cloth was tied completely over the sides of his tall hat and hung in a hideous black bow behind.

The Chinese mourners, of whom in a rich funeral there may be as many as fifty, are apparently hired to make a noise, for from their mouth issue the quaintest of cries, almost like the wails of the Mohammedan women of Morocco, who are only allowed out once a week—namely

Friday, their Sabbath—when they go to the graves of their ancestors, over whom they wail or cry. That, poor things, is their only weekly outing. One would hardly call it hilarious. Or again, as a Hindoo relative wails and cries beside the cremation of his father or mother, hits himself and tears his hair in lamentation, so thousands of miles away in China a man accompanies the coffin, dressed in sackcloth and rags, who loudly wails and laments either as the nearest relative of the deceased or his representative. His dramatic agonies are so great that he has to be held up on either side by official mourners in white garb.

I have seen a great many funerals in China—funerals in Peking, in Shanghai, in Tientsin, Hong-Kong and Canton—and I have also seen country funerals; and every one of them has seemed to have some special claim to interest.

One thing is always the same: the immense weight of the coffin, and the struggle of the men who bear it. The dramatic support of the chief mourner, literally held up under the armpits, as though in fear of imminent collapse, is very remarkable and has survived for 1,000 years. The decorativeness of the round barrel-like banners—some of the latter are really fine old Chinese embroidery—and the sweeping pall, falling almost to the ground, can be very handsome affairs at a grand funeral.

Amazingly old-fashioned class of gongs and cymbals and all sorts of weird instruments, all tending to make a discordant noise to keep away evil spirits. The belief in evil spirits is widespread. The spirits are supposed to be most dangerous at the height of a hundred feet or more, hence the Temple of Heaven and other buildings have reached their summit at ninety-nine feet so as to be safe from their wicked encroachment. Religion and superstition die hard. Therefore it is that, the world over, one sees more quaint old-fashioned customs connected with birth, marriage and death than in anything else. Long may they remain. They give us to pause and think. They reproduce history before our modern eyes. They are generally picturesque and pleasing, and oft of singular interest.

After another fifteen inches of rain in a week in Peking—such rain that the streets were in places two and three feet deep in water and quite impassable—there was a perfect procession of funerals. One heard the drums and gongs

on every side. Funerals to rights of us, funerals to left of us—and always picturesque. Travel fills the mind if it empties the pocket.

When a Chinese Buddhist dies, all his family assemble in the room. They fetch the "Specialist." He looks at the man's face and hands to see that he is quite dead, and therewith can tell if it was a natural death or not. When satisfied, the Specialist gets the date of the man's birthday and his age, which he writes on a "certificate" (a registrar). The soul of the dead man is supposed to remain in the house until the date the Specialist names as a lucky one for his burial. Usually from one to four days, and during that time all revels are prohibited. Before the man actually dies the relatives prepare a suit of new clothes of cotton, but never white. (The Mohammedan washes the dead body; but not the Confucian, who shaves the hair near the forehead.) His family all wear white; and if not too poor, they put the corpse into his *new* blue suit and place him in his coffin, with a little camphor and incense. Then they burn paper money (imitation) and imitation silver ingots—so that his soul may be well supplied.

On the third day or night the family engage Incantation Priests or Monks to come and read the Bible—the Buddhist Bible. The family all take part.

The day next before the funeral the Lhama priests come with their big drums and trumpets, and they make the "big noise" to keep away the devils from the dead man. This goes on all night, and at the third watch of the night, *the son sees the spirit of his father at the moment that the soul is passing*. The spirit will take with him the paper money and everything that has been burnt by his son. The Chinese think the soul goes to the big Temple Tung Yu Miao, where the spirits ceaselessly pass round the Buddhas.

Every town has also a "Cheng Huang" (City God) Temple, the magistrate of the underworld, who is supposed to take the spirit to the "Ye Wang," the equivalent of Rhadamanthus, the weird judge who controls the transmigration of souls, after they have passed the ten trials for the sins they committed while alive. Men and women offer sacrifices to this underworld idol on the 1st and the 15th of every moon, when the Temples of China are often crowded.

A good man's soul goes to Heaven—to Buddha or Jupiter—a bad man's soul goes to Hell, and will turn into an animal, a pig, or an insect. The rich people pay the priest to get him out of Hell. If he was not too bad, he has the chance of returning through transmigration as a human being to live as in his previous life.

A distinctly more religious wave has arisen in China during the last fifty years. Buddhist Bibles are now widely read and discussed. The Confucians' god is their Ancestor Worship, and new Associations and Clubs have sprung up to expound their teachings. Roughly speaking, there is no connection between the Confucian and Buddhist Temples; put vaguely, one might say that Confucianism represents the Church of England, Buddhism the Roman Catholics, and Taoism the Presbyterians. Confucianism appeals to morality and conduct. Buddhism is more metaphysical, and Taoism is more materialistic. All three are concurrently accepted, and each attempts to meet different wants in human nature.

Generally the coffin stays in the home for some time, if a burial ground has to be chosen and bought. This involves consultation with a geomancer, who prophesies which plot of land will bring luck to the after generations of the deceased. Both rich and poor are very particular on this point. All ceremonies in all classes are still hidebound by the traditions of astrology, mythology and the Seer.

Now for the day of the funeral itself. Every friend is invited. A good meal is prepared at the house of the deceased. So a funeral is altogether an expensive experience. While the men feed, women go behind the coffin and must cry out aloud. Each must then kneel down and take a cup of wine and kow-tow three times to the dead friend's coffin. A man always takes a present with him to a funeral ceremony, which he personally hands to the nearest relative. Presents of money are placed inside a specially prepared envelope, or a big piece of blue drapery. Or a white silk scroll is often given as a token of condolence.

Buddhists one and all drink tea before leaving the house.

For a poor man there are only eight to twelve coffin-bearers. For a rich man, with his heavier funeral accoutrements :—

1st class. 62 carriers are required for coffin.—Men dressed in blue. 2nd class. 48 carriers are required for coffin.—Men dressed in green. 3rd class. 32 carriers are required for coffin.—Men dressed in black.

Every funeral, even the poorest, has to make some sort of show of wealth. Something must be carried through the streets. Vases of artificial flowers. Paper imitation houses, rickshaws, motor-cars, beds, cardboard servants, all to be burnt to accompany the dead. These things are called "Lin." But something showy must accompany every funeral procession.

A 3-foot cardboard pipe is often copied if the man has been a great smoker. The pipe is emblematic, and when burnt its ashes will go with him to the next world, otherwise he would miss his smoky consolation.

Or again, weird ragamuffins in hired funeral garb may carry amid banners and flags: Tokens and emblems of opium water pipes; the craft of the dead man; his Mah Jong counters, or replicas of his recreations.

After sixty days, relations bring umbrellas and paper boats, and burn them before the deceased's door, to aid the dead man's soul to cross the river. Did the Greek myth of the crossing of the Styx on Charon's boat originate in China?

The family wear mourning clothes for a hundred days, and must indulge in no theatres or amusements. The son must never sleep with his wife for one hundred days; he must never drink wine or eat good food for the same period. If the wife becomes enceinte during these one hundred days, the son is denounced for failing in respect to his august father's memory.

The chief mourners wear hemp garb over their ordinary dress, which must now be of the quietest colours and roughest fabric. When the funeral is over, they discard the actual hemp. Relatives, when coming to offer sacrifices immediately after death, must always put on long white cloth gowns over their usual attire, and these have to be supplied by the bereaved family. So it is an expensive matter to be buried, and the expense often cripples the poorer families for years. But it must be done. It simply must be done. It symbolizes respect.

The mourning period is kept up for three years for the death of a husband, one year and a half for that of parents,

and six months for uncles and cousins. The duration is a little relaxed nowadays.

I was once held up by a funeral for over an hour. It really was a wonderful sight, and one can only hope the Chinese will keep to their dear, delightful, picturesque old customs. Everything the deceased possessed was there in emblem to be burnt and accompany him across the Jordan. There was his motor-car, reproduced life-size in every detail in cardboard, and there hanging on the footboard was his servant guard. Constantly through the streets of Peking such solemn processions are wending their way. I love them.

The comical side of a modern funeral is that you may hear Chopin's "Funeral March," together with the tom-toms and clashing of cymbals.

When a high-class Mandarin dies the Confucian etiquette is even more formal. His body is washed and the underwear changed. Then he is dressed as if he were going out to some grand ceremony. If he was an official he wears his most gorgeous robe and over-jacket, his jewels and his watch, with all the decorations and honours that belong to his rank and dignity. If he was a general he is put in military attire; uniform, gold-braided epaulettes, medals and sword.

In this way he lies on his bed "in state" for a couple of days (if summer, only one day), during which period gorgeously arrayed monks walk round the dead body in constant incantation to the accompaniment of low music.

All the time the family members lavishly throw silver-paper ingots into a huge urn to be burnt for the use of the soul.

On the third day the relatives come to witness the "putting into the coffin." A certain hour is fixed for this great ceremony, to be determined by the astrologers and monks, for, as at birth or marriage, so at death, astrology and priests play a very important role. They love the gruesome, the morbid, the unnecessary, and look upon it as filial devotion. Yet even the unreligious in China are afraid not to employ the monks. Tradition throttles China.

At the stroke of the hour the astrologer has fixed the body is taken from the bed to the central hall, the eldest son holding the head, and the grandson the feet; if two

sons, they divide the duty. If no sons, the nearest akin. The corpse is then lowered down into the coffin. The coffin, be it remembered, is always big and heavy. There is a lot of space left empty, which is filled up with lime and camphor and packets of cotton to the very top.

Now it is most important that the body should lie exactly in the middle of the receptacle. The correct position is arrived at by means of a red silken thread joining the two ends of the coffin. On this is hung a small "cash" coin, with a hole in the middle. This coin must fall just on the nose. Then, and not till then, the lid is put on and nailed. Whereupon all the members of the family must at once howl and bemoan, really howl and bemoan, and loudly too, in the most distressed manner, for they will see no more of their departed one.

A large part of this is, of course, traditional make-believe and pretence, but the custom survives and is most strictly adhered to among the high-class Mandarins and Confucians.

The gate of the house where someone has died has a large white cloth-covered scaffolding erected in front, and two white lanterns with written characters in blue are posted on either side. Trumpets are sounded and drums beaten whenever a visitor arrives or leaves. This is to notify the members of the family behind the white curtain inside, which hides the coffin. In the front of that is a table, on which are placed the candles, the incense-burner, and the photo, or the tablet of the deceased. A regular altar, in fact.

When the day of the funeral arrives, the relatives and the friends go through the same ceremonies over again. After which the coffin is brought out and the procession starts. A large procession takes two or three hours to form up. It cannot be hurried. The family follow immediately behind the coffin. The sons or grandsons walk under a white Canopy, which is held up by means of four bamboo poles. The men walk most of the way, the women generally go in carriages, cars, or in Peking in their funny little Peking carts.

Every Chinaman should, for the good of his soul and his progeny, be buried in his native soil, and, more than that, if possible in the neighbourhood where he was born. The deceased is often brought home from one province to another, by train or steamer; even from the remotest

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parts in the West of China. Where a man is a native there he must lie in his last rest, among his forefathers if it be possible. So it often takes a whole month of long-drawn-out ceremony to bury a Mandarin and costs a small fortune.

Tradition is an amazing chain of solid links well soldered. In theory it expands, but in practice it seldom breaks. The liberating impulse is foiled before the rapier thrust. Take China. The top are educating their sons in Foreign Universities, and their daughters highly (sometimes) at home. They think their ideas very modern and very advanced. In outside matters they may be; but at home?

No.

The amazing chain of tradition is just as strongly forged as before. They still choose the wives for their too youthful sons. They still keep them apart till the (so-called) marriage festivities are over. They still land the shy young girl into her husband's house, and still expect her to sever all connection with her past and do the bidding of her newly-acquired family. Thralldom.

She in her turn will rule her son's wife and home. They talk a lot about advancement; but at marriage or death they go through all the old rites and practices of thousands of years ago. Tradition.

The eldest son is burdened with his father's leavings in wives and families, and he must carry on. Duty.

In his time he also will talk of emancipation; but will he emancipate himself or his followers in reality or only in theory?

Take another instance. One of the most highly educated and advanced men I met in many months' wanderings in India was bringing up his daughters hemmed in by all the old Hindu traditions. He didn't approve of them and honestly said so. In fact he talked wisely about expansion and advancement and wider vision. BUT he dared not break away from tradition. Thralldom of caste, fear of religion, kept him hidebound, and he married his daughters just as the Chinaman does his—as a chattel to be bought and sold. Oh, the thralldom of circumstance. The chain of tradition.

I chanced upon an unusually magnificent funeral one day in Peking.

This happened to be a particularly splendid one, and

typical of the processions for great men. The coffin was borne on high by eight bearers. They were dressed in dark blue with white crests or coats of arms embroidered in white on their coats. Three hundred hired people in all sorts of weird garb marched in that procession.

The coffin was covered with a magnificent pall which reached almost to the ground. It was made of panels about a foot wide of scarlet and white embroidered in blue, and the deep fringe hung in wide festoons. This funeral was largely attended by children. Children played the music emitted from tom-toms and drums. Weird and wonderful, strange and discordant. Sad, yes, very sad, like all Eastern music. They have special tunes for special occasions, and the funeral music is probably as old as China and has descended for centuries from generation to generation, just as the famous epic poem of Finland, the *Kalavala*, has descended through the chants of the Runo singers.

It always seems to me that all these historical customs and ceremonies should be encouraged. They are the evolution of the people. They are priceless. Something new may take their place, but that is no reason why the old should be obliterated. Every note in the music of the past, every thought in the poetry, every colour and form in the artistic whole, are the bricks upon which that country has been built, and are not only interesting but really important and oft-times command profound respect.

A thoughtless laugh from the stranger, a shrug from the passer-by, can stab the heart and soul of a people who certainly ought to command respect for their customs and habits, and have often much to teach the careless traveller who thinks himself and his own habits better than any in the world.

Nothing and nowhere is "best." There are grades of good or bad in everything.

Like the Chinese I always feel our dead are with us. That our dear ones know. But unlike the Chinese with their horrible coffins, I prefer cremation. Ashes scattered to the wind or the sea particularly attract me, just as one good action in memory of a dear dead one is worth all the marble edifices in the world.

In China, luckily for the traveller, they still adore funerals, and although marble by the mile, like the Campo

Santo at Genoa, does not exist, tombs by the million jot the land. China is verily one vast graveyard. If you buy a house, or a plot to build on, a field or a large property, you have to buy all the graves and all the responsibility of seeing that they are never molested. There are small, poor graves, mere sand heaps; there are taller mounds, and sometimes trees; now and again there is even a wall.

The most beautiful things in this Chinese children funeral were the banners. There were blue and gold, and white and gold. Perhaps the best way to describe them is to say that they looked like pipes or tubes three or four feet high, standing on the top of poles by which they were carried. They were beautifully embroidered.

"Ah, that was a very important man's funeral."

"How do you know that?" I asked.

"Because of the banners," he replied. "Those show his position." And then he proceeded to explain how freedoms of cities, offerings from municipalities and other great things were always carried in the funeral procession.

"How extraordinary," I exclaimed, "that this should be done in ancient China. I suppose our sending an officer's riderless charger at a military funeral, or a gun carriage at a naval one, is merely our Western way of copying an Eastern idea."

"Probably," he replied.

"Besides," I added, "we send medals and decorations; we put helmets upon the coffins."

"Yes," he answered, "and the Chinese send the empty chair in their procession."

Pathetic, but poetic.

A very poor man once presented himself at a hospital. His left hand had nothing but the thumb and stump left. It was gangrenous and in a terrible way. So bad was it that he had to become an indoor patient and to have constant treatment. The doctor pondered over that hand and got his assistant to investigate. The man would say nothing.

Time went on. He suffered much. At last what remained of his hand was cured and he showed gratitude, a somewhat rare emotion among his race.

Before he left he said: "You have been so good to me that I will tell you how it happened. My family is very

poor—my father died—I was his eldest son. There was no money to buy my honoured father a coffin. I took the only good coat in the family to the pawn shop. I threw it down and demanded fifteen dollars (about thirty-two shillings). The man threw it back.

“ ‘Fifteen cents you mean!’ he cried.

“ ‘No, fifteen dollars I want, and I must have.’

“ ‘You won’t get it here. Begone.’

“I took my hatchet out, laid my hand on his counter and chopped off my fingers. They lay on the counter and the blood flowed. The pawnbroker seized fifteen dollars from the till, gave them to me, and pushed me out of the shop. I ordered, and paid for, the coffin for my honoured father.”

“But your fingers?”

“I left them on the counter—not much sacrifice that for an honoured father.”

“But why did he give you the fifteen dollars?”

“To get rid of me, because he feared I should go into the street and say he had cut my hand off, and it would have cost him forty, perhaps fifty, dollars to square the magistrate.”

Such is the chivalry to the dead in China.

The car halted. What was it?

Coming slowly towards us to a sort of chant and with beating drums and a thundering gong, came another funeral party. We drew up at the side and waited.

They advanced. It was the public highway, and in this public highway the mourners burnt their funeral effigies. Three paper houses, each some dozen feet high, each carried on a sort of table, were placed across the road. They looked rather like the houses of Punch and Judy. In front of them five large trunks of cardboard were stood, containing replica of the man’s own clothes and perchance some of his real ones. Then cases of paper flowers, and colossal wreaths. These were five feet high, and a little boy of four feet nothing was carrying one of them, and then pillows and beds, and bundles and packages too far away to see.

Under a canopy came the funeral party. The chief mourner in white cloth knelt in the middle of the road, all his followers knelt and bowed their heads three times in kow-tow to the ground. Meantime priests chanted.

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The whole traffic was held up by now ; but what matter. Everyone, rich or poor, friend or foe, must pay respect to the dead.

Then a blaze. All the paper structures had been ignited, and everything was burnt to ashes. It seemed a somewhat dangerous idea ; but nothing happened, and the whole party moved slowly home again.

This is done at the Hataman end of the Chang An Chieh in Peking, at the side of the street. From this point the Western hills are seen, and the setting sun. From time immemorial the funeral effigies have been burnt upon this spot, as the sun is setting, it must be one of the most ancient rites that exists in the world.

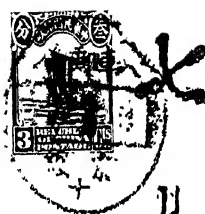


On the very top.



The top tower of the Great Wall beyond Nancou, North China, September 2nd, 1925. From right: Monsieur Brossel, the author sitting without her hat, Mr. Agnew, Mrs. Agnew, of California, W. W. Grantham, K.C.

4 3 2 1



月

初
拾
日
封

寄青龍橋車站上

王斌先生收下請轉交

周永盛先生台鑒

山西大同車站交緘

This is the envelope of a letter delivered to my palanquin bearer on the top of the Great Wall of China. Read downwards from 1.

CHAPTER XX

HONG-KONG AND OTHER MATTER

Americans advertise too much : Britishers advertise too little—
The boycott in Hong-kong—All servants walk out from foreigners' homes—Beautiful houses in The Peak—How tea is grown—China takes to Thè dansants—The Chinese bride's last fling at independence—The Soviet match had exploded—Brigandage everywhere—Murder rife—Awful Chinese roads : British the best in the world—China suffering from dry rot.

HONG-KONG was a revelation. One has heard so constantly from Canadians of the wonders of Vancouver, and from Americans of the beauties of San Francisco, that somehow one had never visualized Hong-Kong as being more beautiful than either. Of course it is our own fault.

The Americans advertise too much. The Britisher advertises too little. Both are equally faults.

Hong-Kong was truly a revelation. She is a great commercial clearing-house. The British flag flies over that mountainous island, and below lies one of the most superb harbours of the world. I say that without hesitation, and I know Rio de Janeiro, Vancouver, Naples, Vigo, Helsingfors, San Francisco, and many more. In time, no doubt, it should become an ideal winter resort, for the winter climate is beautiful, although Hong-Kong lies so far south in China that it takes two or three days by sea to reach it even from Shanghai. And there is no train service.

Alas, I had not much time for Hong-Kong, which, from my point of view, was too grand and modern, and therefore centred all my energies on dirty, ancient Canton. But I did love the drive to Repulse Bay, to admire the fine golf course, and buy a cedar wood box for furs, and drink tea on our Admiral's ship, and run round the harbour in his gig. All very delightful ; but Europeans are clean and tidy, and therefore not representative of China.

And all this modern city of Hong-Kong has sprung up in eighty-three years. The barren rock was ceded to Great Britain in 1842 and this is what we have made of it.

Envy, jealousy, and, if the Soviet can make it hatred they will, have now seized the Hong-Kong student, and he is busy quarrelling with his best friend.

For seven long weeks the European homes of Hong-Kong were servantless and almost drainless and waterless in July and August owing to the silly boycott and one of my most exalted friends explained his daily toil in this wise:

"First I got up—Put on the kettle—dressed, boiled two eggs, and after my breakfast left the dirty mess, made my bed—beastly thing. Went to my job.

"Thank God the ladies of Hong-Kong served a midday meal for all of us derelict chaps at the Club, including their own husbands. Anyway we got one good square meal, like the Tommy at his canteen. I shudder to think of their washing-up, poor dears."

"Well?" I interrogated.

"Well? do you call it—I call it ill. About eighty-three every evening I used to go up the Peak on foot (no tram, mind you), with my chop in a little paper bag in my hand. The only person to welcome me was the cat—and the cat seemed as pleased to see me as I was to see the cat——"

"Well?" I continued.

"It wasn't well," he said, laughing. "I had to cook that chop, and by the time it was cooked and eaten I screwed up courage to tackle and wash those dirty dishes left in the morning."

And this man had paid wages to ten servants for many years, not one of whom wanted to leave him, and said so.

Hong-Kong and its four hundred square miles is nothing without its shipping. It is no good for agriculture and no minerals worth working have been found; but it is a great import and export centre, and even a building yard for great ships. The Soviets were out to ruin it permanently through their followers in Canton near by; but I cannot believe for one moment that they have succeeded.

The casual visitor often wonders what is the most important industry of China. As far as the people themselves go of course it is rice, but that does not play such an important part in exportation as it does from Java.

On the other hand, tea and silk affect the traveller, as also indeed the outside world. One travels through

hundreds of miles of tea-gardens. Most of the tea now goes to the United States, just as most of the Indian tea comes to England.

Many valuable commodities sprout from low shrubs, to wit: Tea, coffee, cotton, wine and tobacco. They are rather disappointing to look at, except the cotton, and never shall I forget the cotton district on the Mississippi river near New Orleans when the plant was in full bloom. It was like a garden of intermittent snow.

Tea is a small-leaved low plant, at its highest reaching about to the human waist. When the new crop begins there are little baby buds upon the trees. The women and children—for be it remembered the women do most of the work in China—go out and pick these tiny buds. They are then dried in the sun with the greatest possible care, because they are the gems of the whole crop. When ready they are known as *Presentation Tea*. Very little of this superior quality is made, in fact for the general market none whatever, and as a friend once remarked: "That tea is worth twelve golden pounds a pound weight."

Tea and silk are the two greatest exports from Hong-Kong. And while we use more of China's silks, and China's parasols and fans, the Chinese use more and more European goods. So that, in spite of strife, the Customs Revenue increased. Civil war, brigandage, strikes and boycotts affected Canton and Hong-Kong, Shanghai, Swatow, Hankow and Tientsin; but the other ports greatly increased their trade. The Maritime Customs are well looked after to-day, but after 1929, if they go entirely into Chinese hands, it may be a very different story.

In general it may be said that Foreign Trade interests remain in a fluid condition subject to the ebb and flow which are the concomitants of unstable governance. Illogical taxes and heavy impositions have weighed heavily of late on some important British concerns. When China succeeds in obtaining Tariff Autonomy many of the present import duties will be double and treble what they are now and there is no likelihood that there will be any resultant freedom from further inland (Likin) taxation.

Besides importing European goods, China is importing European sports and games, and the Chinese lady has taken to dancing. She had not only taken to dancing, but the really modern advanced few have taken to dancing

in public. Very pretty they look, these tiny little people. Such publicity a few years ago would have been perfectly impossible—bad, wicked, barefaced, yea, immoral.

Thés Dansants are quite common at the large hotels in Hong-Kong, Tientsin, Peking and Shanghai. Nearly all the girls wear their native dress, and nearly all the men who dance don for the occasion "European." Sometimes one sees a man dance in his graceful long silk coat and soft silk slippers, but not commonly. This is just one of those funny little freaks that arise when nations change their habits and customs. If a girl can dance in Chinese dress, why can a man not dance in his long robe ("Pao-Tse")? But fashion or custom says "no," and no it is. So if he is fond of dancing the man has to run home and change or arrive at the hotel with his suit-case and pop on modern garb.

And these modern dancing young women were very painted. Young women used cosmetics three thousand three hundred years ago, for they were found in the tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen. Perhaps they did the same in China; anyway they do so to-day, and they even shingle their heads—another of the fashions of Egypt, where frescoes show bobbed hair and shoulder-straps.

And while the folk danced, the papers printed the following pretty little story of torture:

"The Chinese are mere pawns in this game, and it is instructive to know how they are being used. Some time after the anti-British boycott had been in force, a British steamer or steamers commenced again to trade from Hong-Kong to Canton. We have it on the best possible authority that torture, in the form of the 'sun bath,' has been applied to several Chinese who have been arrested by the men put on to picket these boats—this as punishment for travelling on a British steamer. This consists of shaving the unhappy individual's head, stripping him naked and leaving him out in the sun tied to a telegraph or other post. If by the end of the day he is not stark, staring mad or dead, a second day will finish him. At any time, we are told by those intimate with the south, the Cantonese are the most susceptible of people to terrorism, but where threats are backed up by deeds as in these cases, they are absolutely under the heel of their oppressors.

"So we see Canton bound hand and foot to the Soviet, and used as a menace against Hong-Kong and all British interests in China. The position in Hong-Kong is immensely serious—ininitely more so than a great many people here or anybody at home seems to imagine—and its trade is being slowly strangled. Unless something drastic is done,

it will be in a parlous situation within a very few months. Meanwhile the harbour of Canton was never so busy, and is daily crowded with ships of all nationalities except British. These are appalling facts to face, and we only give them on the best authority, but do so to put an end to the possibility of living in a fool's paradise, as too many of us have recently been doing."

The Soviet match had exploded the Chinese fuel, and had used the bellows and fanned the flame so successfully that the youth of China had roared itself hoarse, and its paint cans had disfigured many fine buildings. Foreign films are still wiring home for protection.

Like a barometer one watched it rise.

1st month, June. Soviets ruled Southern China.

2nd month, July. Soviets completely dominated China.

3rd month, August. China began to open her eyes and look about a bit.

4th month, September. The bandages began to fall away.

At the dawn of the fifth month the United Association of Public Bodies in China actually issued a manifesto.

6th month, November. Soviet rule had decreased in the north, but the cruel aftermath remained. And Civil War was taking the place of Anti-Foreign war.

7th month, December. A Conference sitting in Peking, unable to make headway except to have insisted on the establishment of a real President. While civil war chopped off heads and threw bombs.

It had been interesting to be in China from the earliest days, and see the temperature rise and then fall. When I told of the Soviet propaganda *en route* with the mysterious diplomat with whom I had travelled, few believed the sinister power, or that Moscow had been busy in the Kremlin all May organising the Chinese trouble, or that foreigners would so soon be murdered.

Now what avail is a Peace Pact at Locarno with anarchists in England, and civil war in China, and Russia in ruins

There was no getting away from strife. While Peking was busily whitewashing, or pinkwashing, the huge black-painted insults to foreigners upon her gates and walls, fearing they might make a bad impression on the Council about to meet in her city, Shanghai was pasting up another lot of her posters against the enormity of treaties, and concessions, and tariffs.

If only the Chinaman would take a look at the excellent roads, avenues, drains, lights, police, the cleanliness and order of the Foreign Concessions with their magnificent Banks and offices and private houses in Shanghai, Peking, or Hong-Kong, and then have a look at the Chinese quarters they would have a rude shock.

Chinese roads are pretty awful for motoring. They even beat Southern Italy and Spain, but then we Britishers are spoilt, because we have the finest motor roads in the world. Our tar surface, the signs in villages and corner posts, our motor control at bad points, all combine to beat the rest of the world hollow : and our City traffic is the best regulated.

Civilized people have brought in money and civilization, in the case of Hong-Kong and Shanghai have made magnificent cities in eighty-three years in mud swamps—and as an antidote Canton, only eighty miles up the river from Hong-Kong, is as dirty and unhealthy and squalid as she was hundreds of years ago.

These Chinese are dear good people, lovable people in the lower classes and high-minded in the upper classes ; but the vast middle classes just above the very lowest and just below the very highest really cry for the moon without even being able to reach a single star *en route*.

Hardly a good beginning to a Conference in Peking to read :

PEKING'S INSULT TO DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR BODY.

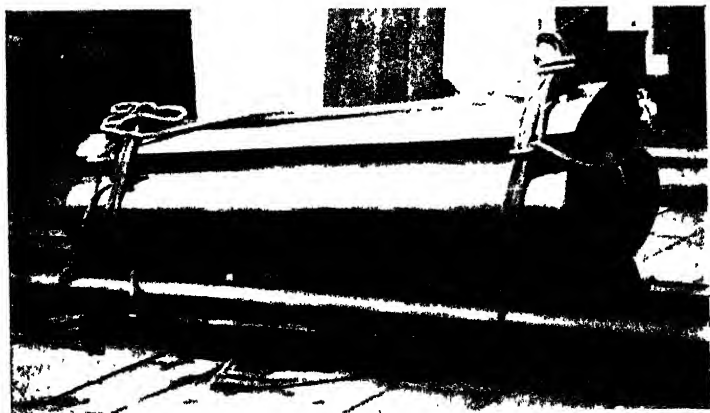
*Consuls Publicly Libelled in Government Gazette :
Accused of Corruption and Shielding Murder :
Extraordinary Outburst by Minister of Justice.*

PAINED SURPRISE AND PROTEST BY LEGATIONS.

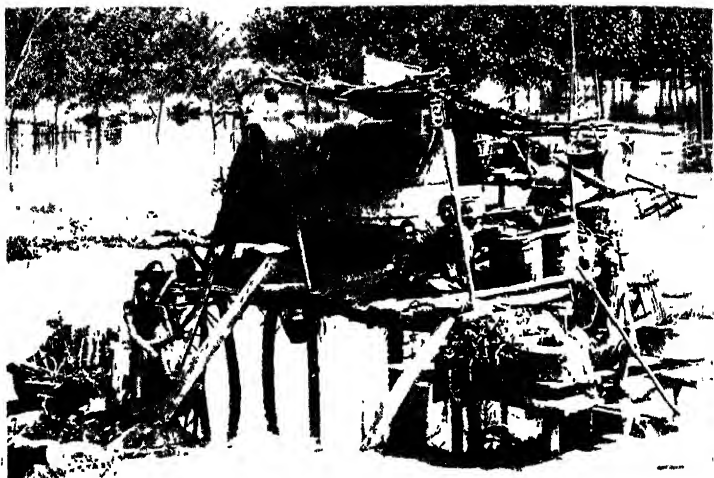
China is suffering from dry-rot. Each would-be builder starts his schemes to help China (not unmindful of helping himself) to find his house of cards is wobbling on dry-rot. She must learn to help herself—and then she will play an important part in the comity of nations ; and her natural wealth is unbounded.



Pi Yun Sou Temple, Peking, where the remains of Sun Yat Sen lie. (See pages)



A solid Chinese coffin. (See page 204.)



Yearly floods in China. Refugee family on the Yellow River, August, 1925.
(See page 247.)



[By kind permission of North China Daily News.
Guarding bodies of drowned children. Broken dyke behind.

CHAPTER XXI

CANTON THE CURIOUS: FIRING OVER MY HEAD

Canton was worth the risk, and it was a risk—Beauties of the Pearl River—Wonders of the junks; hundreds of them—"Boatee have no eye, he no can see"—Pagodas—Warned not to go on shore—Canton synonymous with silk—The International Settlement—Nobody dare stop in the hotel—Ship held up—Captain shot dead—I wangled the Captain and slept on board—Mounted guard, and we are railed in—Sailing suspended—Sun Yat Sen's first demand for the Chinese Customs—Sun Yat Sen now lying near Peking in a glass coffin, like Lenin lying in his glass case in Moscow—Mrs. Sun Yat Sen ceases to be "bolshy"—A quaint advertisement for embalming—Drowning a baby girl—Over-population the root of much evil—A child bought for eight dollars—Hair nets—How a baby's hair is dressed—The women in trousers, and the men in coats—Gorgeous shawls embroidered by women and children—London is Canton's best customer—Streets five feet wide—The amazing food: bits of cats, dogs, snails, worms, slugs and snakes hanging in the shops—The kitchen god—The craftsman at work—I love Canton: it was "potted China."

I WAS determined to see Canton. In fact of all the places in China, I believe I had set my heart more on Canton than anywhere else. That southern spot is still possessed of all the charm of ancient China, but as war was in the air the difficulty was how to get there.

I'm a fatalist in many ways and believe the day of our death is as ordained as the day of our birth. Still it is silly to take silly risks. But in a case of something important such as seeing potted China at Canton it is worth the chance.

Hong-Kong, that wondrous harbour which at night twinkles with a thousand lights as if the stars had descended and were reflected in the water shadowed by the famous mountain called The Peak—Hong-Kong was thoroughly British. A British possession, in fact, of many square miles with fine shops and public buildings, with splendid roadways, with hotels and clubs, with everything that modern civilization could produce.

Canton, on the other hand, only a few hours up the Pearl river, was another bag of tricks. It has remained in exactly the backward condition as the British had found

Hong-Kong eighty-three years ago. More than that, Canton had probably remained exactly the same for 500 years. Aye, one might almost say 5,000 years, for China has not been a land of rapid progression.

But how was I to get to Canton? Nobody thought it was wise to go, although a steamer was occasionally running up and down the river with Chinese coolies as passengers, and silk and tea as cargo, but otherwise the jaunt was considered too dangerous to be undertaken.

I fought hard, and it was finally decided that as I was determined to go an American party would do the same. Off we started.

It was a wonderful day. One of those days never to be forgotten. And the Pearl river once seen can never be forgotten either. The word Pearl is no misnomer. It was early in the morning that we started. The great junks were plying up and down the harbour in the soft mist of early haze.

Junks in picture-books had always seemed to me to be of prehistoric origin. Something picturesque and queer and quaint and ungainly, relegated to picture-books, but no longer real things floating on a real sea. Imagine one's amazement to see these real junks upon the real water. Not one or two. Dozens, aye hundreds of them. Big junks for merchandise. Small junks for fishing. Middle-sized junks for every conceivable thing, and one and all perfectly wonderful in form and often ravishing in colour.

The sails of these Chinese junks even beat the gorgeous yellows of the fishing boats at Chioggia, near Venice, which they resemble strangely in one factor, that the eye of God is often painted on their sails as an omen of good and an offering to the great Deity who sees all things.

Indeed the Chinese fisherman will say: "Boatee no have eye, boatee no can see, no catchee fish." A delightful idea and highly picturesque. Yes, those junks were indeed a surprise and a revelation, especially the large ones with their high quarters at the stern. The stern was two stories higher than the bow, which added considerably to the strangeness of the barge. Many of them were being rowed. When the wind fails, these great lumbering craft are actually rowed with long, long oars, and six or eight men at an oar.

On glided our boat. For hours and hours those paddles revolved. Sometimes the river was an enormous width, as wide as the Mississippi near St. Louis, or the Ganges, or the Hooghly near Calcutta. But whatever its width it was always strewn with innumerable junks. They certainly are the most picturesque boats and fascinating craft in the world, and there must be tens of thousands on the China coast.

The banks of the Pearl (or Canton) river are universally low, with a few patches of hills here and there, and the sky-line is sometimes intercepted by very tall pagodas. If I remember rightly there were five of them, but as the river bent and turned one saw the pagodas from different angles and they appeared multiplied many times.

The pagodas, as a rule, are five, seven, or nine stories high. They are always picturesque, especially with reflections when they are near water.

Still on we sped. The boat did not stop often, and after four or five hours of enchanted scenes of wonderful effects—opalescent light and shade and enthralling dreams, there was a murmur of "CANTON" aboard.

By this time we were surrounded by hundreds of barges. The river bank itself on either side was thickly packed, literally with thousands of barges.

These barges, some fifteen or sixteen feet long, are called sampans. Canton is largely made up of sampans. They contain an enormous floating population. There are said to be 100,000 sampans at Canton, and those 100,000 sampans are said to contain 500,000 people, or half a million living souls. A dozen people covering four generations is no rarity.

That is prodigious, isn't it? Half a million people afloat.

They say these Cantonese folk are born on the barges. They live on the barges. They are married on the sampans. They bring up their own families on their own boats; and they die on these sampans. And, if report be true, there are hundreds of these old men and women who have never set their foot on solid earth during the whole course of their seafaring lives; and the babies begin to handle the lumbering oars at four. Younger than that they have a piece of rope tied round their waist with a bamboo float attached in case they fall over board.

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The boat people have the lumbering gait of our own sailors, and feet set far apart.

One really wonders if they could walk a mile on land. On the other hand, as we have seen, there are Chinese who jog-trot at four miles an hour, hour after hour, and day after day.

Canton is the great silk quarter. After the firing on 23rd June, 1925, from the Canton side, which was replied to by the foreigners on the little Shameen International Settlement, it was impossible to move the silk by boat. The merchants were not to be done, however, and the entire silk crop went walkee-walkee to the north. Think of it, a thousand miles: two thousand men walking a thousand miles with silk upon their heads, or hanging from their heads, or hanging at either end of a long pole slung across the shoulder. Occasionally they got to a stretch of river or canal and help by boat, otherwise they jog-trotted. It took two months; but the silk accomplished its walkee-walkee to safety.

British interests are greater in Canton than any other part of China. Other nations' interests are small by comparison. And that applies to all China, where the British predominate, the Japanese come next, and, far below, the Americans, and still much further below in numbers all the other nations.

I knew there was an hotel and quite a good hotel at Canton. But I also knew there was nobody in it. The danger of brigandage, murder, war and other horror was so great that no one would venture to stay in Canton. That, however, did not deter me from taking a suit-case from Hong-Kong, which I had smuggled on board and hidden on the off-chance of spending a few days in this weird old place, in the early weeks of 1924, for it was during my first visit to China that I visited Canton, which had originally been captured by the foreigner in 1857, when they settled down in the little island of Shameen.

Now to go back a little. Four weeks before, and, as it happened, for many weeks after, there was great trouble on the Canton river. In fact, a fortnight earlier one thousand coolies on the lower deck of a river steamer had rushed up the companion ladders, had overpowered the captain and imprisoned him; had pinioned the ship's officers. Had robbed passengers of every mortal thing they possessed. Had insisted on the second officer

steering the ship into a side port by holding a revolver at his head. Terrible were the accounts in the papers of what some private individuals, merchants, ships' officers, and missionaries had suffered. A truly delectable spot was and is Canton, for just the same goes on. Ships held up. Captains shot dead. Neither foreigner nor native safe. Pirates everywhere.

But there before us, the sea front strewn with sampans plying the water, lay Canton. A low rambling and not altogether enticing spot from our deck.

That Pearl river steamer on which I had arrived was a revelation. She was three thousand ton, her speed was sixteen knots an hour, or as fast as an ordinary Atlantic passenger boat. She had beautiful dining saloons and deck accommodation, and—revelation of revelations—she was built on the Clyde in Scotland. She belonged to an English Company in Hong-Kong. She was managed by a captain from Liverpool, who had been in the service for twenty-six years, so in the midst of all the barbarity and ancient queerness of fascinating Canton this very up-to-date British boat was plying from Hong-Kong to Canton. Who says the British Empire and the Briton are not the greatest product of the world to-day? Just travel about a bit and see for yourself. You can meet the Briton on sea or land at any time and every corner of this vast world. And his splendid workmanship is everywhere.

As the ropes were thrown over the gunwales and the American party proceeded to clamber up into their rickshaws ordered for an hour's run round Canton before returning for the night, to safety, and Hong-Kong, I hied me to the curious iron gratings that crossed the boat behind the captain's department.

Now this was a very curious arrangement. It was an entire wall from deck to ceiling of iron posts. It ran from one edge of the boat to the other. In fact it looked rather like a lions' cage at a Zoo. About six feet behind this first cage was another one, and yet still a third.

In the six-foot space between one and two, four Indian soldiers had been marching up and down with fixed bayonets the whole seven hours required for the twisting hundred-mile stretch. In the next division were sentry sailors and ships officers. In the third, which was really a sharp point on the bow, was the captain himself, giving directions to the men at the wheel.

"Captain," I called almost breathlessly as I shook the bars.

"Captain, may I speak to you?"

"Certainly," replied a charming man of middle age.

"What can I do for you?" he asked, stepping forward.

"Captain, can I possibly stop in Canton?"

"Well, not very easily," he replied, evidently surprised. "There is no one at the hotel. It is too dangerous."

"I know," I replied. "But I write and paint and I cannot leave Canton in one hour. So do you think the hotel would take me in?"

He looked at me evidently puzzled, and I continued almost breathless, for if I was really only to stay there one hour, there was not one second to lose. "I have brought my suit-case and my paints. Do, do tell me what I can do?"

"Well, you can sleep on board here if you like," he replied.

"Here? Where?"

"There are seventy berths on this boat," he said.

My breath was taken away. "May I stop then?"

"Certainly, if you like to take the risk, but, mind you, the risk is great."

And, turning to a man, he said: "Find this lady's suit-case and carry it to Number Eight."

"Why Number Eight," I asked.

"Because Number Eight, Madam, is immediately behind my own cabin. We have an Indian guard of eight soldiers on board, and four of those soldiers will be on duty all night, so it is the only safe place for an English lady."

"I will be back in an hour," I called, as I tore down the gangway, crossed the quay and jumped into the last rickshaw which was waiting for me; and I was handed a letter.

Everyone had been so determined that I should not see Canton that I had ventured to write to a very important man. On reaching the Bund the following letter was handed to me:

"DEAR MADAM,

"WITH REFERENCE TO YOUR LETTER JUST RECEIVED I AM ASKED TO SAY THAT...CONSIDERS THAT YOU WOULD BE WELL ADVISED NOT TO GO

INTO THE CITY, UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY SOME FOREIGN LOCAL RESIDENT WITH A GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF THE STREETS AND CONDITIONS HERE, AS THE FEELING BETWEEN CERTAIN DETACHMENTS OF TROOPS IS AT THE PRESENT TIME SOMEWHAT STRAINED. A FEW SHOTS WERE FIRED LAST NIGHT."

This was not very reassuring, nor was the notice below encouraging, for written up facing the ship in large letters was

"SAILING SUSPENDED."

After the American party had been through the town, a large part of their one precious hour having been spent in the shops, we again reached the quay, where another steamer was waiting to bear them back to Hong-Kong, where they were due to arrive fourteen hours after leaving in the morning.

"I am not coming back," I said to the head of the party. "I am staying here."

"Is it safe?" he asked. "I have a letter from the American Consul saying it is not safe."

"And I have one from a high official saying that if I stay it must be at my own risk, but having come to China largely to see Canton I am going to take the risk."

"Very well," he replied. "I can only wish you all success."

I would not have missed that time in Canton for anything, although I may as well own at once that I had barely time to eat or sleep. I was so busy painting and walking, and running in rickshaws, and asking questions and filling up every moment of my stay that I was quite worn out and exhausted by the end of it. But the sketches were a great success at the most famous gallery in Paris later.

It was truly and entirely impossible to be on shore alone. It was equally impossible for the captain or officers to leave their ship for one moment. But some charming English boys belonging to the Customs became my guides, and I promised to do exactly what they told me and leave a street or square the moment they thought it unsafe to proceed. I kept my promise and saw a vast amount.

One of the first things to notice was a proclamation just put up by the President of Southern China, the great "Sun-Yat-Sen." That was put up in January, 1924. It announced his determination to confiscate the taxes on behalf of his people, which were still being collected by

the allies as indemnity for the Boxer trouble. That was, in fact, the beginning of the demands that culminated in the great Conference in Peking twenty months later.

And let it be owned they fired in Canton that night over my head, and a bunch of dead men were picked up in the morning on the quay along which our good boat lay. It was quite an experience; but somehow, with a good British captain and those fine-looking Indian soldiers, one felt quiet safe. It was worth it. Canton well repaid the visit, and the shots all night were not really alarming.

Beside our large paddle-steamer lying alongside the wharf was a gunboat, and on that gunboat Sun-Yat-Sen himself was hidden. Canton at that time was so unruly that everyone's life was in danger, his own included, and he was plying up and down the river ready to bolt at any moment from his own unpaid soldiers and the fury of the mob.

Poor soul, he was afraid of being killed by the hands of his own men, and a year later he died in Peking of cancer on the liver, and lies in a glass coffin (like Lenin in Moscow) in the Western hills awaiting burial. Let us hope it won't take so long as many burials do in Canton.*

Below is a quaint advertisement in connection with death.

YUT QUONG CO. LTD.

EXPERT EMBALMING AND UNDERTAKING.

Ton Chun Road, Canton.

Our Company has a full stock of the most modern and up-to-date coffins, made of the best foreign woods, elaborately decorated both inside and outside, imported direct from America. We have specialized in the most modern and scientific methods of embalming and preserving the body so as to keep it life-like and imperishable for an indefinite period. We always keep a full line of Clothing, in both Chinese and foreign styles, for burial purposes, and tomb-stones of all designs. We maintain

*He was still unburied at the opening of the New Year of 1929, and lying in a glass coffin. After his death his wife became very pro-Russian, and lectured on behalf of Soviet rule, until she was invited to Moscow. A few months of that delectable city changed her opinion, and she returned to China; but not to preach Soviet doctrines.

a chapel, suitably decorated and furnished for the accommodation of our patrons, where funeral services can be held. We keep an automobile hearse for funerals and have expressly imported modern machinery for lowering the coffin into place, so that all jolting and accidents to the body can be entirely avoided. We cordially invite all to accord us a trial, and we shall endeavour to give every attention and satisfaction to our patrons."

Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen, who had taken a prominent part in the over-throw of the Manchu Dynasty, was elected first Provincial President of China in 1911, but resigned in favour of Uan Shih-kai, the great man of China. After his break with Uan, in 1917, he repeatedly tried to establish a separate Government in Canton, and was elected President by the Old Parliament at Canton in April, 1921.

Never could one forget the sight of those twinkling, blinking little lights on the sampans in the early dawn on that mysterious grey-blue river. And it was very, very cold. Dressing quickly, piling on fur coat, and sweater and everything possible for a person possessed of one small suit-case, and a bag of paper, brushes and paints, I sat me down on the dear little camp stool and gazed. I was fascinated by the strange junks and sampans and enormous sun hats of the people on the quay, and the turbans of the Indian soldiers beside the iron grills, who stood and watched and smiled and showed their white teeth and white eyes in pleased admiration. The native Indian is a dear simple creature. He is very appreciative. He is mild and serene until roused, and then he is the devil. Much the same applies to the Chinese. Asiatic blood, probably.

I had been busy blotting in impressions for over four hours when an eight o'clock bell announced breakfast and the friendly captain who had been trained on the *Conway* at Liverpool fetched me.

"You are cold and tired?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied. "But it was worth it."

Looking over the side of a launch at Canton in the evening glow I saw a bundle float past. It was a small, long, queer-shaped thing being wafted by the stream of the Pearl River away to the sea.

"Do you know what that is?" I queried my companion.

"What? That bundle?"

"Yes."

"That bundle is a baby."

"A baby," I exclaimed. "What do you mean by a baby?"

"That is a baby girl," he repeated quite calmly.

"A baby girl. How do you know it is a baby girl?"

"Because we constantly see baby girls drowned like that in Canton."

For the moment it took my breath away. One rather gasped at the idea of processions of drowned baby girls passing down to the sea, and yet, when one paused to think, realized how humane it really was.

The population of China is prodigious. The mouths to feed are more than the rice can fill when famine comes, as it so constantly does. Men can work and shift for themselves. Women—who really appeared to me to work in China far harder than the men and certainly do so in the East generally—women are not so well paid, and may, later in life, become a burden on their families.

Happy baby girls. Better dead than starved. Before they had known the horrors, privations and miseries of the life of a poor class Chinese woman, almost before they had opened their little slit eyes in the world at all, they were dropped into the Canton river and their tiny bodies were wafted to the sea, just as the Hindoos' ashes and bones tear along the Ganges to the ocean. How hygienic, how sensible, how sanitary, how wise.

Parentage is God's greatest blessing. Misapplied it is the Devil's curse.

Birth control is reducing over-population in civilized nations and giving the wanted children a better chance; but the East is still animal and breeds like rabbits, promiscuously and anyhow. China has partly solved the problem by ridding herself of the superfluous females at their birth. Anywhere in China a dead baby girl may be stumbled upon in a field. To save a child a friend of mine bought a baby girl for eight dollars, or sixteen shillings. It sounds strange, but it is a solemn fact. The child's mother died at birth, and, like other babies, she might not have been fed, and she might have died naturally, or like many other babies she might have been

placed in the coffin beside the dead mother. There are children alive who have been taken from coffins. This child was handed over for eight dollars, and educated and brought up by an Englishwoman as an adopted daughter. From a few hours old she was adopted. But heredity was stronger than education or environment and she grew up Chinese of the Chinese in every thought and was most ungrateful, and cursed the lady for "taking her" from her people.

One of the great trades of China, in which thousands of women and children were employed, especially round Tientsin, was the making of hair nets for exportation. Now there is no hair to net, and the trade has disappeared and the net makers starve.

Even the Chinese young ladies don't intend to be out of the fashion as regards their heads, even if they have to wear the conventional trousers on their legs, so the young ladies bob their straight black locks, and if they are very, very, very emancipated, they even have their hair waved.

Broadly speaking, nearly all Chinese women keep to the traditional. That means that a baby girl's hair is shaved every week for the first three months. After the age of three it is allowed to grow as long as it likes. It is very black and very strong. And when it gets thin a new wisp can be bought for a few pence. And now the young ones begin to shingle or bob—shades of their ancestors! The hair question is following the broken feet which started eight hundred years ago in the Tang dynasty, and has not yet disappeared.

Trousers for married women are also on the wane in the upper circles. What next?

Well, between my two visits the Chinese teachers themselves made an uproar. A hundred Professors—not students, this time; but Professors, from different Soviet Colleges—caned the Minister of Education at Tientsin—Yes, caned him. They did not slash him with their tongues, but they beat him with their sticks. That was another new fashion for the young.

Up to the present the most obstreperous, untidy, and ill-kept students I have ever seen are at the Free Educational University called El Azar in Cairo—where sedition is bred in the tea-pots and wash-cans strewn

among orange peel and sandals in the court-yard of the Mosque itself. But when schoolgirls dismiss their head mistresses and Professors cane the Minister of Education it looks as if China took first rank for insubordination.

Ah—but never mind the students, peep at those lovely shawls. Everything has its vogue. Fashion is ephemeral.

No one knows when shawls originated. Perchance Eve covered her shoulders with a date-palm frond and so evolved the first shawl.

The word is elastic. The half-nude women who coal the boats at Suez often throw a piece of old sack across their shoulders to save falling bits of coal from hitting their bare skin, or for resting the edge of their baskets, which they carry full upon their head, when empty upon their shoulder. That is rather a different class of shawl to the exquisite embroidery and material of Canton, where I saw the most exquisite shawls I have ever seen on the shelves in a silk shop rolled in little bundles. Being inquisitive, I asked where they were going to.

"To London," was the reply. "He is our best customer."

"What is the price of that grey and yellow one?" I asked.

"That very expensive," replied the Chinaman. "He weigh ten pounds."

And so one learned that shawls were not sold by the size but by the weight of the silk of which they are composed.

"He very good shawl," continued the Chinaman. "He very embroider, he lady no have, he go London."

In any case the lady's purse "could no have," as the price of the shawl was somewhere around £40.

The enormous amount of business transacted in the silk shops in Canton is surprising. It amounts to tens of thousands of pounds a year, and yet those silk shops are no shops at all, but little dark windowless passages leading from the open stalls of the tiny narrow streets, interspersed here and there with a dwelling-house or a temple. In fact the Chinese appear to do everything they can to disparage their wares.

First of all visualize a street five or six feet wide. We

should call it an alley. Some of them are only four feet wide, and the grandest rarely reach ten.

Windows and doors there are none. Hanging from above, just as the old sign-boards hang on the English inns, are planks of wood from twelve to eighteen inches wide, from ten to thirty, yes, thirty feet high, on which are painted in letters of every hue the name of the shop, what it contains, and sometimes little pictures to invite the passer-by.

These hanging signs of every shape and form are often beautiful. But between them it is a little difficult to thread one's way. Bright blue is a favourite colour with a large writing (Chinese of course) in white, dull green decorated with gold, the prettiest scarlet or orange painted on black, wonderful red lacquer work, bronze and brass. In fact the study of the signs of China would take not one life but many lives. All this tends to darken the street. But even that does not make it sombre enough apparently, because pieces of canvas, bits of matting and coloured clothes are stretched across at intervals from roof to roof until the little alleys become veritable arcades.

Poor may the native be ; but in sun rich is he.

And the sun? I am a veritable sun worshipper. The sun seems to mean so much it has only one rival, and that is the intellectual life of dear dirty old London. The sun gives such beauty, such colour, such dancing lights and shades and gaiety to Nature. One's very soul seems to starve amid grey fogs and slithering rain and heavy clouds and mud and drear scenes. The sun expands one's body if it dulls one's intellect, and petrifies one's mind and makes one lazy or indolent.

Paradise must be the Sun of the East (not the tropics) and London the Mecca of intellect.

I could spend hours and weeks merely looking at the queer contents of those shops, merely watching the artisans at work in the background, where it is still darker than in front, jewellers inlaying with the beautiful feathers of the kingfisher ; embroidering on fine muslins or lawns ; stitching patterns on fine shawls, plaiting fringes a yard deep ; chiselling patterns on to brass ware ; working in gold thread on velvet ; putting silver and gold into ornaments. They are real craftsmen, these people, real in the sense that they love their work, are original, and

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take pains to attain perfection both in design and workmanship and make back and front equally good.

In some things China legitimately resembles Russia. For instance, when one enters a Russian dining-room, one always sees, or did see, an Ikon in the corner. No good Russian ever thought of sitting down to meat without crossing himself, and saying a little prayer to his patron saint on the Ikon. If he was rich he had a magnificent Ikon, if he was poor he had only a paper card, but in every household in Russia, as I first knew her, the Ikon filled the most prominent place and was looked up to as a sign of grace and good omen.

Among the superstitions of China is the Kitchen God—TSAO-CHUN.

Every house has a kitchen god. He represents the spirit of the dead in the underground world, and generally has a small lamp placed before his little shrine. So strong is the belief in this TSAO-CHUN that there is great fear that he should assume the shape of a fox, because if he does that, he will later assume human form and play nasty tricks with the women of the household. In fact, the superstition goes so far as to think that this kitchen fox can set fire to a house, and on the Festivals of the 12th and 15th of every Moon, candles are lighted and incense is burned, so that the fox spirit should not throw things about.

Now in the Chinese shop there generally is a little shrine; in fact no shop would expect to do good business if it did not exhibit and worship its little household God.

No. 1 is the tablet to the Gods of the Earth. Daily before the business begins the red tapers are lighted, the incense is wafted and the family prayers are offered up.

No. 2, further inside the shop hang the ancestral tablets and the shrine of the Kitchen God. These are sometimes common and poor affairs, at other times they are beautiful, but whatever their value daily offerings must be made to the shrines, and of course the ever burning lamp must be tended.

No. 3. When one comes to the wealthier shops there is often at the back a veritable altar, sometimes a beautiful affair with fine carvings, bits of enamel cloisonné or fine pieces of Chinese Satsuma. In fact these little altars

and offerings have a particular charm, and show the inborn religion of the Chinese people.

Not only in Canton does one see such things ; but in the Chinese quarters of every city. There is no doubt about it, as a people the Chinese are devout. So, ladies, your shawls are embroidered in weird alleys ; but the little picture of the saint has smiled down upon its workers and the little religious lamp has helped them ply the needle.

In this land of silk, naturally the mulberry trees vie with the Tea gardens. They are taller and prettier than Tea, and in their line just as important, if not more so. For the pretty bloom turns into fruit, and on the mulberry leaves themselves the little grub is fed that makes the cocoon that spins the fine silk from which finally the wonderful silks of China are woven. And yet China is not the greatest grower of silk ; Japan outstrips her. Japan produces more than half the raw silk of the world to-day. But silk plays a big role in China herself. All the richer men and women wear silk. Indeed the men with few exceptions in the upper classes still use their fine silk robes and petticoats.

I simply loved Canton, with its three millions of people. The narrow streets are amazing. They are a veritable maze. These wonderful and intricate alleys are cut right across here and there by new modern respectable roads. The solid villa streets of the wealthy are found in the West End, " Saikwan " ; but in the native part, which, after all, to the stranger is the only part worth visiting, there are alleys for pearls and jade, ivory, and herb medicines, gold embroidery, ginger packers, shoes, lanterns, and baskets and, above all, fish, fruit and butchers' shops. Every one of these places has a fascination of its own, and strangers stop aghast before the meat vendors', the most fascinating of all.

The workman in Great Britain has his Sunday joint. A good solid piece of meat from which the family can be fed hot-sliced on Sunday and cold for many remaining days. A good solid piece of meat is utterly unknown in Canton. Everything is tiny and everything is put in a little bunch on the counter except what hangs on strings as a veritable fringe above the shop opening.

It was a revelation of invention.

One portion standing by itself was a large ear,

presumably a calf's ear. Another portion was composed of two kidneys. Yet another was apparently a bit of tripe. Three small chops composed another dish. Sheeps' tongues and oddments yet another. A dozen ducks' tongues on a saucer were sold as a real delicacy. Insides of beasts seemed the chief food displayed, however. Bits of fish, flesh, fowl one had never seen before, because in Europe they are sold as offal and not for human food.

Hanging from the strings above, the portions were yet more weird. There were bits of cats and kittens. There were whole rats and mice. There were scraps of bright orange-coloured chicken which had evidently been dipped in deep saffron. There were weird red things, scarlet things, pieces of sun-dried duck and much else.

It is a strange thing the world over that the individual quantities of food sold to the people are so small except in northern climes. Two thousand five hundred miles up the Nile, in Central Africa, in the land of the elephant and tiger, the crocodile and leopard, the hippopotamus and pelican, the little markets surprise the traveller. A few poor women squat on the sand in their black or dark blue rags while displaying as a portion for sale :

three small tomatoes,
three bananas, or two eggs,
a few ounces of dried dates,
a tiny scrap of sun-dried fish,
two small oranges, or half a cupful of rice.

One often wonders if each is a portion for a whole family.

In these Chinese shops there are bits of cats and chickens and dogs that have been cooked in some curious way which makes them look shiny white. There are perfectly flat rats hanging up in bunches by the tail. How they have made the rat flat I know not, but he is compressed until he is only half an inch thick. A leg or wing of a duck sun-dried, often saffron-yellow in colour. Bits weighing about two ounces of the most unsavoury looking morsels, dried or cooked, until they are nearly black, little portions of snails, worms, slugs or snakes, in fact more than half the things in a Chinese shop defy description and set one wondering.

The fish shops were equally remarkable. There were all kinds of fish, and sharks and cuttle-fish and octopus, and endless things I had never seen before.

Canton is certainly the concentrated essence of China.

Canton, in fact, is Potted Life. Nowhere in the world do the old and new hustle one another more continuously than in China.

In one note one reads of the reparations of the "Ten Thousand Ages' Bridge at Foo Chow," and the next moment one reads of increased motor services, wireless stations, or "the completion of a stone camel-back bridge at Anting near Shanghai after three years' work." Ancient and modern with a vengeance.

It is a curious jumble of ancient tradition and honesty, of illegal modern taxes, of fighting with unpaid soldiers, of trickery and deceit of every sort, which instead of liberating China are putting a noose round her neck.

China was once great. China became utterly impotent.

Great Britain, the United States and Japan came to her help with money and brains, followed by France and other countries. China has reached her present position through their aid, but China must pay her taxes, abide by her Treaties, cease Civil Wars, and get to work again, or she will sink back into the chaos from which she was extricated a century ago. Canton for years, is Canton worse confounded. Nobody's life is safe.

Very, very reluctantly I turned my back on Canton, firmly promising to return in a year or so. But, like everything else in this adventurous journey, nothing went "according to plan," and one did things one had never dreamed of, and left the dreams one had dreamed among the stars and clouds of uncertainty.

Canton might have been, and was, lively in January, 1924, but Canton was positively fiery and outrageous two years later.

So Visit No. II. to Canton must remain among the "to be's" that did not materialize.

I loved Canton it was "Potted China."

CHAPTER XXII

SHANGHAI THE MAGNIFICENT

Beautiful illuminations—One thousand miles from Peking—First visit in depths of winter in comfortable train in thirty-six hours—Ten o'clock at night whirled off to see China's greatest actor: he always plays women's parts—Making love a sad affair—Eighteen months later, Shanghai disturbed by episode of 1925—Grossly exaggerated and made into a very harmful incident—I was back there after recircling the world, and in tropical heat heard the great trial—Hardly any Nationalist flags—Nearly 3,000,000 in Shanghai—All the beauty of the city made by foreigners, and the wealth too—China full of surprises: never left in peace for long—Characteristic headlines in Press—Great Chinese hospitality—Retinue of servants—Courtyards within courtyards—My Manchu Amah could not understand a word of Shanghai Chinese—A modern so-called European wedding: a contrast with a Manchu wedding—Half European, half Chinese still holds sway.

SHANGHAI has the prettiest night illuminations I have ever seen.

There is a music-hall variety-show place which is all lighted up at night. It beats those of Broadway or Piccadilly Circus or anywhere to fits. Outlined against the sky is a pagoda, a sort of church steeple, a tower-like erection, and a kind of battlement. It is rather heterogeneous, and has nothing whatever to do with the show below. It is only a piece of night illumination, and is the most fairy-like and dainty thing I have ever seen in my long world-rambles.

The famous and lengthy drinking-bar of the club, the night outline of a music-hall, the splendid dining-ballroom of the Majestic Hotel stand out pre-eminently in Shanghai, which is too European to be classed as Chinese, too wealthy and well-managed to be called Oriental; and which in fact is not a Chinese town at all, except for a few dirty streets and alleys called Chinatown. And yet the Chinese populace far, far outstrips the foreign; but the foreign far outstrips the Chinese in civilization.

It was ten o'clock at night.

My first journey from Peking well nigh a thousand miles had taken thirty-six hours, but the train had run

through a most interesting part of the country and I had thoroughly enjoyed the trip with my face glued to the window during all the cold hours that were light, in a most comfortable railway coach, outside which were the mystic words that the compartment was "reserved." The joy of a long journey alone is unspeakable. The misery of being "shelved" like apples in rows in an apple house with thirty-two odd human beings is barbaric.

(My next visit 2 years later was in a military train with every possible discomfort.)

It was ten o'clock at night and a pretty cold night too. For Shanghai in winter is not a warm place, and we had passed through much snow in northern China.

Standing on the platform and looking for suit-cases, I was surprised to be addressed by name by a tall young Chinaman in his native dress. I suppose I looked surprised under the flickering station light, for he said:

"I am Gaston. Father has sent me to welcome you to Shanghai. The car is here. I hope you received our telegram at Peking to say that he hoped you would stay with us."

"No," I replied. "I did not receive any telegram, but it is very kind of your father to have sent me the message. However, I have taken a room at the hotel and I think I must go there."

Truth be it said, I had already ordered a fire and a hot bath, and was looking forward with joy to a hot-water bottle, none of which I felt inclined at that moment to give up. Accordingly I stood to my guns and insisted on my going to the hotel.

When the suit-cases had been found and some few words had passed between the young Chinaman and his servant, he said:

"The greatest actor in all China is playing here to-night for one night only. I have taken tickets because I thought you might like to see him."

"But, my good boy, it is nearly half-past ten," I said. "The performance must be over and I have travelled over 36 hours." "It only begins at ten o'clock in China, and as he does not come on in the first part, we could reach the play about the time of his entrance. It might interest you."

I am glad I went to that theatre. It was most interesting.

It was a fine large theatre, and literally packed. Crowds had flocked to see Mei Lang Fang in one of his great parts. Everyone drank tea, ate rice and meat, or fruit or nuts, or sweets, or sucked sugar-cane. Everyone spat and everyone was in a seat exactly like a low old-fashioned church pew with a ledge in front for their tray. The audience was in itself as interesting to the stranger as the play.

Before us was a large stage, which extended on either side beyond the proscenium, and on these side pieces, in full view of the audience, were the prompter and the tea maker, the latter giving the performers tea to drink on the stage when they had nothing particular to do in the scene at the moment. There was the quaint band; there were also the scene-shifters dressed in their ordinary garb, but ready to move the stage furniture about as required in full view of the audience. In fact the scene was literally what we call "behind the scenes," in the middle of which was the acting stage. So one was initiated at once into the finished play and the process by which it was attained.

This great actor-man impersonated a woman. He always plays a woman. His role is the female character, and his wardrobe is comprised of a thousand dresses—many of them of great value and great age. As most of the plays are classical, he has collected the real costumes of the periods which he represents. Some of these clothes are quite museum specimens of the early dynasties.

We forget in England that in the days of Queen Elizabeth men played women's parts,* no woman then being allowed to tread the boards. Times have changed, and women now often play young men's parts for a change. In China the difficulty with the men is neither face nor voice, both of which they successfully copy, but feet. They easily acquire the funny little Chinese women's shuffle, and the shoemaker somehow manages to make the big feet appear deformed and tiny by cleverly arranging the black and white cloth of which the shoe is made. And so it is that in China even to-day the representatives are all men or all women, and rarely, very rarely in the most modern plays are they allowing the sexes to mix on the stage.

On shuffled the great man. Fan in hand, he reached

*"Behind the Footlights."

the centre of the stage, and stood exactly as a concert singer would do, by himself, and by himself he did most of his lady-like performance right in the middle of the scene.

Of course I could not understand; but as he seemed most dull and undramatic I asked my friend what it was all about.

"That is a love scene."

"A love scene. That?" I exclaimed. "Why if people make love like that in China, love must be a very dismal affair."

He laughed, and we shortly left; but not before I had really seen tea handed to the performers, who merely turned their backs for a few moments while they drank it; and had seen the scene-shifters run about and arrange the shifts.

Quite amusing and primitive.

One cannot leave the subject of the theatre without mentioning a quaint fashion. All through the play men walk into the stalls below and throw screwed-up white bath towels to the boxes and everywhere else. They steam. And why? Because they have just been wrung out in hot water, screwed up, thrown with wondrous precision to be caught with equal dexterity, so that the audience may mop its face and clean its fingers on hot towels. Down they are thrown again when finished with, to be picked up with equal dexterity. And this goes on all the time.

There was much talk and much disaster two years later when I was again in Shanghai over the May 30th (1925) episode from which so much trouble had sprung, that I asked a friend his opinion of the matter, and below are the words of that educated Chinese:

"On May 30th a batch of students and workmen were killed by the Nanking Road Police Station, consequent upon a demonstration they held on the busy thoroughfare. The crowd was so big and so near the Station that the sergeant on duty was anticipating serious rioting. This incident caused great anger and protest from the Shanghai Chinese.

"The students and workmen joined together in sending out circulars and letters to their fellow-students and fellow-workmen all over the country. The latter at once followed suit. Then came the Hankow, Shameen and

Ching-Kiang incidents. Foreign gunboats and volunteers tried to keep order everywhere in conjunction with the local Chinese Militia. Shanghai was barricaded, put under martial law, and volunteers and sailors patrolled the principal streets, and Chinese soldiers were posted at the boundary roads of the foreign settlements. Chang Tso-lin sent his son down with 10,000 smart young cadets to maintain order and discipline. Shops were all closed, save those on side-streets, where the back doors were opened to admit customers. Markets displayed no vegetables, fearing that the students would poison them; house-boys and coolies left their old masters under intimidation; tramways had to stop for a length of time, for they are under a British Company and the Chinese who went by them were afraid of being shot.

"Then all cotton mills and factories closed their doors; Shipping Companies could not send off their ships, as Chinese sailors and wharfmen went on strike. The whole country was in a state of pandemonium and war cry came from all corners of the Empire.

"The Peking Government meanwhile took the matter up seriously with the Foreign Legations, in consequence of which a joint-commission of six delegates was sent to Shanghai, together with two Chinese Governmental representatives. The shops and commercial circle soon found that they could not keep up the strike indefinitely. Since they had already lost millions, and as the Dragon Festival was drawing near for the close of accounts, they met and in the Chamber of Commerce a resolution was passed to reopen their businesses 'for the time being.'

"In this way peace and order were practically restored, and, after the departure of the six delegates, the centre of attraction was also removed from Shanghai to Peking, which in a sense, shifted the interest far away out of the hot-bed of tumult. The gloomy days lasted through a period of two months. Children returned to their schools, students to their universities and workmen to their jobs, and this resettlement continued until Christmas. Things certainly look quieter. Who is wrong is a problem for the Powers to solve. China is no more a sleeping dragon, as she was formerly depicted in the West."

The final end of the whole case was that after ten weeks the three Judges did not agree. So each wrote his separate report, published in Peking, December 22nd, 1925.

It is interesting to note that the British and Japanese representatives stuck to the point; that the American side-slipped so as to pat the Chinese warmly on the back again; but that Great Britain agreed to pay, although the American thought the cause of trouble was insufficiency of police force.

Chinese listened in dozens to that trial in that vast hall; but not a single one of them dared to give evidence. Intimidation had again stepped in. They *dared* not; but they broadcasted wonderful lies, and refused the £7,500 we offered them "as an act of grace."

Intimidation in China is a ghastly weapon. It not only promises death to the person, but death *and* torture to his wives and children, and, worse still, the losing of FACE to his ancestors for generations back. Intimidation is a cruel whip, so cruel that no man is strong enough to withstand its lash. He could and would suffer himself often, but he dares not drag his present and past families to such a hell of destruction.

How is anyone ever to deal with China?

The foreigners who were to blame stood up and honourably said so. The moment had been a tense one. They had acted quickly. The Chinese who were to blame failed to face the music.

"Kill the Foreigners," yelled the Chinese; and when the Police officer in charge was asked why he fired his voice rang forth:

"I *had* to, sir."

Quite impressive. I was at the trial and heard him.

Flags of every nation fly on the Shanghai Bund (water front) to-day, but at the foreign well-built port there are few Chinese flags. Some resent this. Why should they? the Chinese have about 2,000 miles of sea-coast, and they have had 5,000 years of history. Why have they never built such piers and wharves, banks and buildings for themselves?

Answer: Because they couldn't "catchee" trade.

The Chinese love to "catchee," and my cabin-boy on a C.P.R. boat daily inquired: "Go catchee Missie bath?" His way of asking if I wanted it.

And a friend's servant said:

"My wife have catchee one piecee baby last night thirteen o'clock—have plenty long black hair."

And this great modern city built largely with British brains and gold on waste land, where junks once wallowed in mud, was opened to foreigners only in 1842, by the Treaty of Nanking. Article II of the Treaty provided :

"His Majesty the Emperor of China agrees that British subjects, with their families and establishments, shall be allowed to reside, for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or restraints at the cities and towns of Canton, Amoy, Foochowfu, Ningpo, and Shanghai, and Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, etc., will appoint superintendents or consular officers to reside in each of the above-named cities or towns, to be the medium of communication between the Chinese authorities and the said merchants, and to see that the just duties and other dues of the Chinese Government, as hereafter provided for, are duly discharged by Her Britannic Majesty's subjects."

And now the largest steamers in the world ply in and out of Shanghai which foreigners have made.*

Yes, the Chinese have reaped the reward of outsiders' enterprise, and then turned to rend the outsider who has made such business possible by his brains and money. The unthinking school-men would turn him out. The matured, really educated thinking Chinaman is not so foolish. He owns openly that it will be years before they are ready to abandon Extra Territory, and he also owns the students and Soviets have weakened the prestige of China and set her clock back.

Answering my question anent the difficulties of the returned students, a Chinese friend said :

"The returned students fill Government posts in the Ministries, in railways and in banks. Others have private vocations as lawyers, doctors, or secretaries to foreign firms or shipping companies. Many of them who are unlucky are rusting away in their homes. American returned students' diplomas, though of immense size and written in gold and floral letters, are sometimes of a problematic nature and are reported to be easy of attainment."

China is full of surprises. Everywhere one wants to go, students or floods or disease say "No."

*A census, October, 1928, made by the Chinese authorities claims that Shanghai has 2,726,000 inhabitants, of which the foreigners number 48,000. Of this figure 358,000 are living in the French Concession, 855,000 in the International Settlement, and 1,513,000 in Greater Shanghai, which is under Chinese control. So it can be seen how the richer class Chinese crowd into the zones for International protection.

Off to Shanghai, thirty-six hours from Peking—for a second visit, yes—but the Shanghai telegraph staff went on strike and no wires could go through.

Off to Shanghai, yes, but flood waters creeping over Shantung, eighty square miles, another foot deep, every twenty-four hours.

Yet the gods of China have not been as cruel as the gods of Japan, where one earthquake catastrophe overtakes another and yet through their pluck and industry the people rise again and are making themselves rapidly the Power of the Pacific. China, however, has a yearly scourge—rains and flood. They are quite unable to combat either. What a good thing it would be if a few of these school-men would concentrate on how to keep back the Yellow River, in time of flood, or how to save Peking from the summer rains, because they would be helping the land instead of making themselves ridiculous by crying for the Moon.

Homeless! Yes, homeless. It was a terrible sight to pass through. Two hundred thousand people homeless. And yet an almost yearly occurrence. One thousand six hundred villages in Shantung were inundated and in many parts there was thirty-six feet of water. Think of that. Whole villages gone. A terrible sight indeed, no vestige of a tree or a house, here and there a raft or a corpse floating. Never can I forget that scene, or those poor demented people one passed here and there.

It was a question whether my train, fully armed, with soldiers attached and no creature comforts or food of any kind—a very different affair to the luxurious journey of a couple of years before, would ever get through. But it did, only to land me on to more barbed wire and more soldiers, to stop running for passengers the very next day.

Shanghai, the seventh biggest port in the world, is really a modern town, and a fine modern town too, even containing over seventy cinemas. It is a connecting link with much of the trade of Central China and the sea, and but for foreign, mostly English, money and brains would still be hovels and slums like Canton. Women have done their share.

China is a rich country. She has enormous seaports. She has vast rivers. She has most of the minerals.

She has an industrious and overflow working population ; she lacks railways, there are only about 7,000 miles of them, but she herself is rich though mismanaged and misruled.

The countryside of China is both squalid and picturesque. Flat, flat, flat is most of it ; and mud-walled towns and villages are most of it, while one-roomed houses with mud sides and thatched roofs make a good deal of it.

Trees are conspicuously wanting.

Huge rivers, canals, inundations everywhere. A boon might these rivers be, if only the water could be controlled. Given that control China should become one of the world's richest lands, and be free from such disasters as the Yellow River affair of September, 1925. The land is poor and unmanured and the people themselves as yet too poor and uninstructed to use fertilizers. But the fertilizer is gradually creeping in, where the farmer is well enough off to afford it, and with excellent results.

They are never left in peace for long, however. Almost before they get back to their homes, their families and their jobs, almost before one civil war—or an anti-foreign war—is over, soldiers are wanted again. And the Press Gang is at work. One can see ten or twenty coolies arrested together, being marched off, they know not where, or why, for military purposes. Poor souls, one wonders if they will ever have peace again. And yet for ten shillings or twelve shillings a month they are being marched off to serve in, and with, an army, and leave their family at home to fend for itself. Press gang. And the poorer classes—a quarter of the whole world's population—have no vote and no voice. They knew they were being dragged to fight again, and they knew not whether the fighting was still against the foreigner, or another civil war.

"Perhaps," "may be," "not sure," "will inquire," "see about it," go on all the time. The moment one hears anything is "under discussion" at the Waichiao Pu (Foreign Office) one knows it is completely submerged. The Waichiao Pu is a sort of sea bottom out of which little ever rises to the surface.

As newspaper headlines show the trend of events, we venture again to quote from Shanghai papers of October 12th, 1925, the day the famous Judicial Inquiry into the May 30th shooting started, and fourteen days before the great International Customs Inquiry at Peking

began. The headlines show China was not exactly a peaceful spot to hold two important inquiries.

ONE DAY STRIKE FIASCO (AGAINST THE INQUIRY).

OPENING MOVES IN WAR GAME.

400 BOATS AND GUNS MOVING TOWARDS SHANGHAI.

THE ARMED ROBBER PROBLEM.

DENIAL OF WAR RUMOURS.

WU PEI FU (GENERAL IN THE SOUTH) AND FENG YU

HSIANG (PRO-SOVIET CHRISTIAN) COME TO AN
AGREEMENT.

TUPAN OF CHEKIANG SENT HIS FAMILY AND WIVES
OF OFFICERS TO SHANGHAI FOR SAFETY.

WAR IN 10 DAYS PREDICTED.

WIRELESS TANGLE IN CHINA.

DETENTION OF SOVIET STEAMERS.

CHINESE MAGISTRATE'S SON KIDNAPPED (kidnapping
is very common).

FOREIGNERS PUBLICLY INSULTED AT WUCHANG.

WHOLESALE BRIBERY AT HUPEH ELECTIONS.

FRESH HOSTILITIES IMMINENT.

EXTREMISTS IGNORED IN KIANGSI.

GREAT CLEARANCE OF BRIGANDS TO TAKE PLACE.

PEKING CONFERENCE OPENS IN A FORTNIGHT.

SHIPPING BOYCOTT CONTINUES.

PEKING'S INSULT TO DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR
REPRESENTATIVES.

CIVIL WAR ALONG THE YANGTSE.

ANTI-CHRISTIAN PROPAGANDA.

RAID ON SALT MONEY.

CHINA IN THE LIMELIGHT.

SOVIET SHIP SEIZED AT SWATOW.

SOVIETS CARRY ARMS TO CANTON.

JAPAN REFUSES DEBATE TARIFF CONFERENCE.

BEYOND WASHINGTON TREATY LIMITS.

AMERICA READY TO STAND ALONE AMONG POWERS
ON TARIFF INQUIRY.

THREE BANDIT RAIDS IN A WEEK.

AMERICAN SHIP FIRED ON BY CHINESE AND ONE
CHINESE KILLED AND TWO WOUNDED.

And every paper had cinema pictures of white men hugging white women, and white women hugging white men as an inducement to follow foreign morality. Or worse still, black and white men in each others arms, and theft, murder and every other vice. The cinema, I say again, has much to answer for in the East.

A perfect retinue of servants is required for a rich Chinese house.

It is not polite to lock the front door, so a man is necessary for the door. He, the door-keeper, cannot be

on duty all day and night, so a second one is required to relieve him.

Tea and smokes must be provided as soon as any guests arrive. The tea is green, as we know, and served in small, handleless cups without milk or sugar, quite pale to look upon and quite pleasant to drink. It has to be made freshly in the kitchen and the kitchen is often far away, so one, if not two men are required for tea, smokes and general attention on the visitor.

There are cooks Nos. 1, 2 and 3. Cooks for the servants' rice, which in these modern days has to be augmented with meat; washers-up, etc. So the kitchen department may require six or seven men and boys; for the head of the family has to keep his own wives and their children, and his son's wives and their children, and odd uncles and aunts and poorer relations generally, and feed them all.

The entrances to some of the grand houses in Peking are extraordinary. A street which one thinks is nearly related to a slum has a nice scarlet or blue door. One or even two men are waiting there, and perhaps smart rickshaws outside.

In one goes. Amazing.

One courtyard after another courtyard discloses itself, each with low one or two-roomed houses on all four sides. There may be a good garden with basins of goldfish, aviaries for birds. In fact, within that walled one-entranced abode is housement for 50 to 150 people. Up to the present the women seldom appeared in public. But the egg is broken, the chicken is pecking its way through.

The amusing side of the servants and language came forcibly before me when I took my dear old Manchu Amah to Shanghai. Through a friendly interpreter she told me she had been six times to Shanghai, was quite a travelled body in fact, and that she preferred the train to the sea and hoped Missie also liked the train best. Missie did, as it was quicker and required less changes. And Missie promised to send her back by train when Missie started for England.

The great object in taking Amah was for her to see that I got what I wanted in the large European home with Chinese servants which Lord Li Ching Fong had put so generously at my disposal. After some months she knew

my little ways, could washee-washee and sew-sew, and order what was required. Disillusionment—a dozen indoor servants, five gardeners, and two chauffeurs were all ready to wait on me, but devil a bit could Amah tell them a thing.

They spoke Shanghai and five other dialects. She spoke Peking Mandarin. Not one word did either understand of the other.

Result, No. 1 boy spoke good English. No. 1 boy explained to me that Amah's food was ready. In the wonderful lingo she and I had invented I said :

"Amah chow-chow good-bye," and with a wave of the hand notified she was to follow No. 1 to be fed.

She smiled all over. "Sanke you," she replied, and off she trotted. Exit Amah. Her manners were perfect.

"And now," as Mr. Samuel Pepys would have said, "let us hie to the wedding."

It was a "European wedding," quite different from the old Manchu affair, and the latest novelty in China, of two very old Chinese families. All arranged, of course, in the true old style—a boy of twenty and a girl of sixteen were told off to marry one another without ever having exchanged a word of greeting. They were Miss Cheng Raying and Mr. Peter K. C. Li, son of Lord—brother of my host—and Lady Li-Ching-Mai of Shanghai, and grandson of the world-famous Li Hung Chang. The day's proceedings were as follows :

1st. The bridegroom had to go and pay his call of respect at the bride's house. Accompanied by his best man he arrived about three o'clock. The car stopped at the first gate. The bridegroom was invited to enter. An usher accompanied him in. Straight into the central hall he went and most solemnly bowed three times to the head of the bride's family ; then turned round and went to their drawing-room and equally solemnly drank three kinds of sweet drinks. After an hour or more he rose and left the house, when he and his escorts departed for the hotel, to which four hundred Chinese and Foreign guests had been bidden. The invitations had been sent out in English in perfect form, including the word *Miss* for the lady.

As we entered the Hotel Majestic, pale pink carnations, done up according to European style into neat little

buttonholes with safety pins attached, were handed to each guest. All the gentlemen ushers wore European day dress, which did away with the formality of the Chinese ceremonial kowtow; but all the Chinese ladies wore their natural garb, and long embroidered red skirts predominated, red being the colour of good luck.

On a dais, a sort of table or altar had been arranged, and before it and leading up to it were a dozen or more lovely baskets of flowers—gifts from the guests.

On the table itself was an elaborate square parchments, on which were already inscribed :

The names of the bride and bridegroom and those of their parents.

The names of the "Introducers," viz., the friends who had arranged the marriages.

The name of the man who witnessed the marriage.

The date, month and year, when the marriage took place.

The province, prefecture and district to which the bride and bridegroom belong; also a long list of family trees.

Family counts for so much in China, where ancestors are practically worshipped.

The parchment is in duplicate: each family keeps one copy.

This was really already signed, so the four old gentlemen, who later stood behind the table to receive the young couple's severely solemn bows, merely placed their thumbs upon their own names as called upon by the Master of the Ceremonies. Our "marriage lines," so keenly prized by the European poor as emblematic of conjugal respectability, are analogous, and doubtless immigrated from China. We learnt from China and the East when she was great: China and the East must now learn from the West. It is the everlasting cycle of life.

All was ready. The father and two introducers and the old man who was to witness the ceremony on behalf of both families were standing in their Chinese dresses behind the red-covered table, wearing their tight little black caps, and two of them wore the old-fashioned long, drooping moustaches, although the pigtail that formerly matched them had been shorn. Indeed, only the lower classes, and more particularly the country people, wear pigtails to-day.

The band struck up Grieg's Wedding March, and slowly from the far end of the hall the marriage party arrived. Slowly and solemnly and with delightful dignity they approached the table.

First the bridegroom, supported by his groomsmen, Mr. Gaston Li (a cousin, and son of the last Manchu diplomatic representative in London, Lord Li Ching Fong) and Mr. An Sen-kung, on either side. Having ascended the dais, the bridegroom bowed twice to the four old gentlemen and slipped to the right-hand side, standing at attention to await the others.

Secondly came the bride. She was literally "supported" by two bridesmaids, who held her up on either side as if they were afraid of her falling. And so they were, for no bride must raise her eyes until all ceremonies are over, and the husband lifts the veil of modesty from her features that night, and gazes for the first time upon her face.

The dearest, tiniest, prettiest little thing she was, almost smothered in a European Honiton veil, with a long train carried by two small children. The veil was not worn over the face, but bunched round her head until it looked like a glorified mob cap. Instead of orange-blossom she wore a large wide parti-coloured wreath rather like a Hawaiian lei. Her dress was of thick cream silk. Long and thin in style, covered with little bouquets of woven coloured flowers, the same colours that were reproduced in the wreath. It was scalloped at the edge round her feet, but she wore modern, high-heeled shoes. She carried a large bouquet of white carnations and smilax, another concession to European mode, and her four grown-up bridesmaids, who wore much the same style of Chinese dress, carried bouquets of pink carnations. In their case the silks were patterned in soft pale blue; and each girl had dressed her hair as she wished, and wore many jewels and bands and decorations on her head—wonderful ancestral jewels more or less kept for such functions. She also wore enormous brooches of emeralds and pearls or diamonds, so large that no European youthfulness would ever don such splendour; but it was perfectly correct for China.

The bridegroom did not give each of the six attendants of the bride a souvenir as is done in my country, but my country was reproduced again by a five-tier, well sugared

and decorated wedding cake. The exterior of this was an exact replica of one from Gunter's, but the bride did not cut it herself as ours always does, and the cake was far from rich and had no almond icing as ours has—commonly called "Courtship," the more stolid part of the cake being known as "Matrimony." Perhaps the former was omitted because there is no courtship in China. The buffet and champagne might have been served in a London drawing-room, and the queue of guests offering their congratulations might have been in Mayfair, with one exception—to the British mind a very serious exception. The juvenile couple standing side by side who were to start life's long road together were still total strangers to one another, and the bride had not yet raised her eyes from the ground. She never looked up, even for one second, and her little white-cotton-gloved hand mechanically grasped the one proffering its owner's good wishes.

Poor little soul. She looked such a child. It brought a lump to one's throat to see her innocence and shyness. She had never in her life been in a crowd before. She had never heard four hundred voices jabbering at once in many tongues, and yet she had left her father's home, and her mother, for ever, and in an hour would be taken over to be brought up by her mother-in-law and a new and strange family. Luckily a charming-mother-in-law, but she didn't even know that.

Matrimony is a gamble—but in China the dice are loaded. This pencil has run on so that it must be sharpened and turned back, for it has become as dull and bleary as one's eyes with tears.

Slowly, solemnly the little thing had crossed that large hall to the wedding march, had been helped up the three steps by her "supporters," and had turned to the left and stood facing the bridegroom trio on the right.

"The Gentleman who witnesses please read aloud the marriage contract."

The rings were then called for, the bowings being over. The best man stepped forward and produced two rings from his waistcoat pocket. One he handed to the bridegroom, who slipped it on his finger, the other to the chief bridesmaid, who stepped forth to receive it. She it was who gave it to the bride, who apparently put it on her own little finger under the cover of the large bouquet.

"With this ring I thee wed," etc., was not said. The bridegroom did not put the binding ring upon his little bride's finger, nor did any religious ceremony bless the union. A few more words were read, and the bride and bridegroom bowed to the four old gentlemen to thank them for their trouble. Then the bridegroom stepped forward and gave his arm to "his wife." They touched, those two human beings, for the first time in all their lives—this lad of twenty and this child of sixteen were man and wife.

With great dignity and charm they stepped down from the dais, followed by all the six bridesmaids, the four old gentlemen, the ushers, and then the guests. Into the reception room we went, for congratulations and tea and cake and champagne.

One point had been particularly striking: the guests had been received by the groom's father and mother (not the bride's parents). The lady-hostess, in purely Chinese costume, was quite youthful and charming, and wore, among her wonderful jewels, a floral token at her neck the size of a small saucer. It was made of Chinese jasmine, the white blooms, each the size of a small cherry, being arranged in three or four distinct rings, like the old Victorian bouquets; and from these rings hung a bunch of Chinese orchids, also white and emitting the most fragrant scent. Several ladies wore these large pendants; they are an important part of a Chinese marriage ceremony.

Now as regards the presents. There were hundreds of them, but there was no public display as in Europe.

They had all been carried, in traditional custom, to the bridegroom's father's house, carried in truly Chinese fashion through the streets on red tressels, and bound with red cord for luck. These I had the pleasure of inspecting next day, and I was particularly struck with the dozens and dozens of beautiful, many-coloured silk eiderdowns, and a large polished dining-room table. On this was tied a complete set of everything required for eight people: crockery, silver, beautiful glass ornaments, flowers, even coffee cups and silver pots and liqueur bottles and glasses.

Everything was there, everything of the best. And yet that completely laid table was so deftly knitted together with red strings that it had promenaded unhurt

through the streets in the hands of four men, according to the old custom.

When I saw those wonderful presents I also saw the bride, who had already been photographed and whose photo was actually allowed to appear in the newspapers. Her eyes were open now, and though she never said a word—for shyness is virtue at that age and under such circumstances in China—she smiled sweetly, and on leaving presented me with the customary gift to a relative or great friend after a first call. It is a delicious piece of Chinese work: a little Chinaman in full array dancing on flowers and swans and conventional work, about a foot long, and quite delightful.

The ceremony was one of those strange mixings of East and West; the women costumed as Chinese, the men in tail coats. China is in the transition stage in many ways.

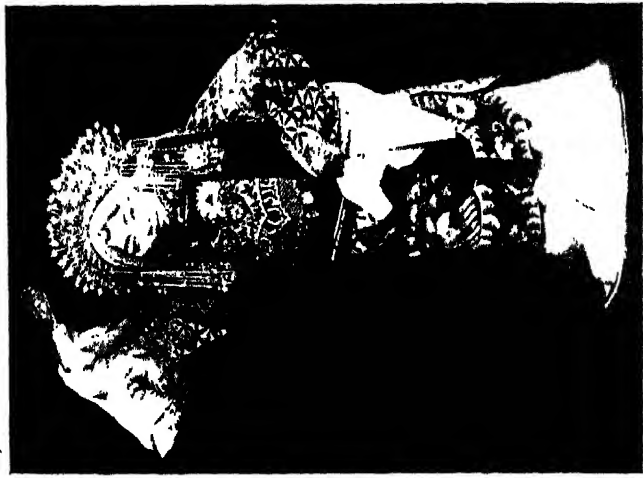


[Ah Fong;

A fashionable Chinese wedding in so-called "Foreign style," Shanghai, October, 1925.



Dr. Douglas Gray, the much beloved Scottish medico, who founded and ran a British hospital in Peking for twenty years, treating 25,000 Chinese a year free. (See page 241.)



China's most famous actor, Mei Lang Fang, in one of his female rôles. (See Shanghai chapter.)

CHAPTER XXIII

AT IT AGAIN—AND THE CHINAMAN HEEDS NOT

The Feast of the First Full Moon—Wonderful ceremonies—China still loves her pageants—Barges of the olden days, a veritable gala of light and colour—The Lotus is a water-lily, and every atom is edible or practical—The festival of mid-Autumn, and again the ninth moon—Greatest of all, the great Dragon Feast—Dragon synonymous with China—Chinaman a child of nature—Love of his bird: takes it out for a walk—Diminutive rice birds—"School-men" make a noise—Soldiers preparing to fight again—More alluring headlines in the papers—Poor old China.

I WENT shopping—Not alone, oh dear no, I never went shopping for anything important unless some good friend who could translate would come and assist. Minor shoppings one does "on the nod," as the auctioneers would say.

Now please peep at the shop, because it is emblematic of China. It was in one of the great thoroughfares. It had no windows or doors, but was bespattered above and below and along both sides with hanging signs to denote it was a coppersmith's. My friend graciously exchanged a word of greeting with the proprietor, who was nude to the waist and below the knees, and then he explained my wants. They were evidently of public interest, for from the regions behind issued a workman wearing a sort of bathing trousers. He came and listened. Out came another, and another and yet another, and when the single file was completed nine, yes, nine unclad Chinese had emerged from the back to listen to the order. There they were all smiling and grinning and as pleased as children over the quaint idea. The master craftsman handed me a bit of paper, a writing brush, and the prepared ink.

"He wants you to write 'Peking' the size you want it," explained my friend, laughing.

"But I can't."

This set the nine behind the counter off laughing too, and the seven who had accumulated in front of the counter. Sixteen in all, and the value of the entire order was five shillings (\$1.25 U.S.A.). My escort painted Peking dexterously the right size and with bows

and thanks, and more bows and yet more thanks, we left. Jumped into our rickshaws drawn by human muscle and went home.

That is merely an instance of how one shops in Peking. That is a touch of life in China. Nothing more.

And amid all the hurly-burly, it was pleasant to cast memory back a few months to that glorious moonlight night in September and the Feast of the Lanterns

What a night it was of colour and beauty! What an enchanting scene that Royal lake at Peking!

The real delight of China to the stranger is naturally the Old China, and one of the delights of that Old China is its festivals. So, to go back to that delightful Feast.

It is the Feast of the First Full Moon. A sort of moon-worship not unknown in other lands.

That "15th of the eighth month" of 1925 (our 2nd September) was a perfectly glorious evening. For days paper lanterns had been on sale on the booths, children had carried lanterns with streamers, lanterns of every conceivable shape and size, the smaller ones being merely a pink paper replica of the lotus (water lily) flower, into which they would ultimately dump a little candle.

It was a particularly important festival; for it was the first time the great lake of the Imperial Forbidden city was thrown open to the public, and tens of thousands, literally tens of thousands of Chinese paid their pennies that night to join this most remarkable spectacle.

The whole road for miles was a moving mass of men, women, children, babies, rickshaws, cars, closed carriages with venetian blind sides, back and windows, all wending their way to Pai Hai. We could hardly find room to stand the car, and it was still early—only about eight-thirty. Two hours later it proved well-nigh impossible to get the car out again. Apparently whole family parties had started earlier. They were already feeding in thousands. There were families squatted among the trees picnicking; there were better off people feeding in the cheaper tea-rooms; there were expensive restaurants where rich folk ate and much to one's amusement used knife, fork, spoon and serviette, with glass tumblers instead of cups or bowls, although the bulk of the men and all the women, without exception, wore Chinese dress.

They were all extremely well-behaved, if anything on the quiet side ; but the Chinese take even their pleasures seriously. Besides, after all, this was a semi-religious festival. And the tired babies never cried. Babies never seem to cry in China or Japan.

With difficulty we reached the lake. It is one of three, and twice the size of the London Serpentine. All the way round hung lanterns and all found their reflection in the water below. Then at the big hall (so much frequented by the Imperial family formerly), arrived at from either side by delightful scarlet lacquered wooden pergola-passages, and now jammed with humanity, we found the chief decorations a veritable blaze of lanterns and light, and took a boat to go out and see it all at its best.

The flat-bottomed boats were the old Imperial barges my host knew so well. The barges that in olden days were gaily decorated with velvet and satin hangings and wondrous pagan embroideries when visitors were present at the Dowager Empress's water-parties. Still the same barges, bereft of their magnificence, still the same men at the poles to punt, but bereft of their uniforms.

Here was a lake—and, ah, that wonderful eastern night, with not a breath of wind and every second person using a fan, a banner or a lantern. Several grown people carried real lotus leaves, and so tall were they, that they acted as umbrellas, for stalk and leaf was over six feet.

The little ladies in trousers with tiny feet walked hand-in-hand for balance, sometimes three or four together. They looked like dolls or marionettes. But there were as many unbound feet as bound, and all had sleek, well-oiled, well-brushed heads with some flower or pin adornment.

The spectacle was amazing down to the smallest detail. Let us begin with the smallest.

Three or four little pink paper lotus flowers, each holding a lighted candle, floating at random on the water. This was cleverly managed by fixing them to a board and sending it off on its own on the lake's surface.

Great clumps of real lotus with a light in the centre of each broad living leaf, all reflected in the water.

The lotus is a water-lily sometimes a foot across and there is not one scrap of that aquatic fruit, flower and

vegetable that is not used in China. It flowers in the summer. Its pink, oval blooms are the size and almost the shape of a large breakfast cup and stand two to six feet above the water on stiff stems. They are generally pink. The leaves are practically round and are ten, twenty and thirty inches across; where the water is deep the stems can be seven or eight feet long. It is a beautiful sight to see the lotus in full blossom on the waterways and ponds and royal lakes of Peking. For two months they are in full bloom and then by September they begin to fade away. They open wide by midday, and gradually close towards night-fall.

Now for their uses. They are a source of great revenue.

The white root, which looks like a long turnip, is edible. The seeds, which look like almond nuts, are edible; the pods are sliced and eaten raw, the stems are used for mats and basket work, and the leaves take the place of paper and baskets. The leaves are sold in packets in the markets and streets. Practically everything portable is wrapped in lotus leaves during the summer heat. The lotus is a boon and blessing to men both in China and Japan, as it must have been in Egypt in the by-gones. Every atom is useful just as the cocoa nut and its tree is of value. And among these thousands of pink lotus flowers and tens of thousands of pale green lotus leaves, flicked little lanterns that night.

There were large lanterns of wood, almost Venetian in style, with coloured paper windows, scattered about the lake in bunches, and discreetly placed all round the water's edge to give the reflections.

Swans, ducks and geese, made of white paper, life-size and cleverly put into shape with strips of bamboo or marsh reed each holding a candle inside its little body and floating in couples or in dozens as fancy willed. There must have been thousands of these floating lamp-like birds. They were always carefully moved off the track by the bargemen.

The barges gaily decked. The kiosks all alight, and, as if that were not sufficient, most of the people also carried lanterns often swinging from long poles.

Fairyland, indeed. On a beautiful, clear, moon-ridden, absolutely tropical sky in Northern China in early September. A wondrous scene.

Then there was the burning of the paper boats—craft about ten feet high. This, of course, was a relic of the old religious ceremony for the souls of the dead. Large paper boats had been burned shortly after noon in many of the Buddhist temples throughout the city. In fact religious ceremonies had been going on all day and continued far into the night. It certainly was one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. One of the joys of old peaceful China.

The Lantern Festival occurs twice a year. There are many delightful festivals in China and they are well kept up. Long may they last.

Shortly before this was *The Festival of the 7th Moon* (August 26th, 1925), "*Chi-Chiao*."

This, though not a regular festival and holiday, is yet of traditional interest, and is a great event with the lady members of the family. There is a pretty legend which relates that the daughter of Jupiter, "*Chi-Lu*," loved the cow-boy, "*Liu Lang*," both being stars. Through her failure in embroidering some heavenly robes for the fairies, she was once sent away to the other side of the milky-way, so that she could not any longer see her lover. But every year they were allowed to meet once, and it was on this particular night. But they could only gaze across the milky-way. To bridge over this imaginary river a flight of magpies used to come on this particular occasion voluntarily to form a gangway for the two lovers to cross. They did. At dawn they depart and never meet again until the next year.

The clouds of autumn at this time of the year are generally filmy and daintily formed, and, as the weather is usually not cold, it being August, the ladies often stay in the gardens till late into the night to enjoy the scenery while watching the two stars and the milky-way, and each thinks how the heavenly romance applies to her own particular case.

And a month later came *The "Chung Chiu," the Mid-Autumn Festival, October 2nd, 1925.*

This comes about the end of September, the 15th of the 8th Moon. It is altogether a Moon festival. This and the Dragon Festival and the New Year are the three greatest festivals of China. Like the other two, the members of a family offer sacrifices, and exchange

greetings. In the evening the ladies "kow-tow" to the Moon, in which they say there is a goddess—much as the Greeks believed in Diana—who looks after their destinies. There is a special cake made for this festival in the same way we make hot cross buns or pancakes. These are called "Moon Cakes," or "Yu-Ping." They are round and stuffed with sweet preserves. They are given as presents to friends and relatives.

The Kwei-hwa, something like a laurel tree, gives forth golden coloured blossoms which are beautifully fragrant at this time of the year, and the folk-lore explains that there is a Kwei-hwa tree in the Moon under which plays a white rabbit.

Yet another Festival is the "Tsung Yang," the 9th of the 9th Moon (October 26th, 1925). On this day people go up the highest hill in the vicinity and have a regular picnic. After which they return to their homes with their invited friends and relatives to partake of wine and crabs. This is a great feast, and at a time when their gardens are full of chrysanthemums, which bloom well at this particular season. It is not exactly a festival, but more a recognized holiday which most families still observe.

All festivals are alluring, and none more so than the Great Dragon Festival. China literally means shows.

Much anxiety was in the air (1925), as persistent report went round everywhere that the Chinese would murder all foreigners on that day. Beyond wild demonstrations and a great deal of noise, nothing really serious happened.

This all-important *Dragon Festival* was on June 26th, and is called Chinese "Tuan Yang." This comes on the 5th of the 5th moon. It is so called because formerly on that day the people of the towns dressed up their boats in the form of a dragon. One can see flags and flowers of different hue covering the masts and the body of the boat, and little children, gorgeously clad, dancing and singing to the accompaniment of a noisy orchestra almost anywhere in China. These boats pass the river or canal or lake from one end of the town to the other. The banks are crowded with spectators, who come miles from distant villages to witness the grand show.

On that day members of the family eat what they

call a "Tsung-tze," a three-cornered rice dumpling which, with sugar or jam, I found quite a delicacy, and a change from the discordant music and noise that never ceased for thirty-six long hours.

It is said that in the time of Confucius a certain great scholar by the name of "Chu-yuan" jumped into the sea because he was disappointed with the political situation of his country, and after his death his countrymen were so stricken with the tragedy and the unfortunate ending of their beloved scholar, that they were wont to collect rice into short bamboo tubes and throw them into the sea as a sacrifice to the spirit of the drowned. This was the origin of the "Tsung-tze," or Dragon Festival, the passing of which heralds the coming of summer, and that the people can pack away their winter clothes and unsew the babies from their cotton wool.

Now, kind readers, the episode of the brass shop and the festivals represent China. That is China to-day. China neither knows nor cares for politics or rowdy students. China just wants to live in peace and earn her daily bread.

Who will gainsay the Chinaman is the child of Nature—the nature-loving grown up boy. Even in the busy throngs of Peking or Shanghai, of Tientsin or Canton, one may constantly see a man talking to his bird—he has taken his canary or lark out for a walk. He uncovers its round wooden cage, and hangs it to a tree. Below he squats on his heels talking to his bird, encouraging it to sing, communing with his little feathered pet, it may be a blue jay, or bullfinch, on a stick, beautifully carved, with ivory, jade or coral knob. The bird is most carefully tethered by a string, just long enough for a comfortable flight.

Yes, he may be cruel to his ox or his ass, his camel or his horse, because he knows no better, and he looks on them as beasts of toil like himself—but his bird, or his chirruping cricket, is his companion in idle hours, and to them he is unusually kind and gentle and considerate. 'Tis a pity he is not equally so to his poor slave-wife.

Talking of birds, there are diminutive little rice birds, so small that when a dish was handed to me at the French Legation, I thought it was small black prunes in rice. Instead it was the daintiest little fried birds, and one ate

them whole—legs and wings and all. The French Minister thought they were caught in nets.

Peep into the tiny bedroom of an hotel "Boy." There is just room for his trestle bed, his tin washstand, one chair and himself, but three birds in cages hang from the ceiling. They are his friends. He loves his birds. One hotel "Boy" told me he actually made forty dollars a month in pay and tips—nearly £5, and no expenses.

"Then you are very rich man?"

"No little rich man."

"What you do all that money?" I inquired.

"Buy house. Have gotee one wife, one baby, one house. Little rich Boy need big house now."

"You want buy new wife, new baby, new house?" I asked.

He laughed.

"No, one wife, two baby, three house make me very rich man—no hotel. Live home." And that is China. Live and let live. Earn a little, save a little. Have a little home.

"You like school-men noise?" I continued.

"No—School baby—no men. They no getee little rich—no work no buy house—talkee-talkee, no good, school men's no good—no good. School girls, they no getee husband."

Contrast the man and his bird, the simple pleasure of fresh air and song, of the stars above in the choicest of green skies, contrast the life of the husbandman, the boy and girl with the cow or the pig, the old woman and her ducks—the simple life of simple people, and modern life. Is there more happiness in so-called civilization that has to be kept going by cocktails?

Life without romance is very unemotional. Life without friends is very sordid. Two unequal minds can never satisfy each other. The East lags behind because its women are uneducated and their sons are the product of their brain. No nation rises to eminence until its women are educated.

"By simple means they live. They earn enough to eat, and when they die they join their ancestors. It may sound horrible. As one who has seen it and studied it a

bit, I feel these people are far happier and healthier in mind than the factory hand and the slum dweller. They know contentment. Their daily wants are generally fulfilled. They are not to be pitied. The pity of it is the fact they were ever born. They are part of the "unwanted millions" clogging the earth to-day.

And all the time the soldiers are being prepared to fight again, to put away their summer fans and get out their winter umbrellas. Horrible. Horrible. Yet both are necessary. Where battle is ruled by climate.

Yes, listen there are the guns. China is at it again. Yet, no, not yet. This was the Republican holiday. There are many, the chief of which is the 10th of October, which goes by the name of the "Festival of the Double Ten." It was then that the Republic was accomplished, something after the Independence Day of America. But it is curious that with these Republican holidays no one celebrates them save the merchants and Government officials, who really do nothing beyond the display of national flags (the new five-colour one) at the windows or over the roofs. The same thing happens with the Republican New Year's Day, the 1st of January. The Government officials observe such holidays, so do the schools and shops, but in their families the celebration is nothing when compared with that of the old New Year and the old festivals.

The shops even close their accounts according to the *old* account days, the children always look forward to their *old* festivals, the servants are paid according to the *old* calendar, the days of birth and death are reckoned in the *old* way, the soothsayers go by the *old* table of stars, and so China has changed but in name. Old customs and traditions are so deep-rooted that the new changes are felt but superficially and only affect the ultra-modern class and those who are obliged to adopt them. This will always be the case.

And here was this dear delightful old China plodding along with her festivals and holidays and habits and customs, and war was rumblin', and three generals getting ready to be at it again. And a new one called Sun had popped up unobserved, and boycott was still rampant and lots of other devilment—and—yes, listen: more interesting headlines in the papers:

266 AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

LINE FROM PEKING TO SHANGHAI CUT.
INTERNATIONAL TRAIN FROM PEKING TO TIENSIN
FIRED ON.

SOLDIERS MARCHING EVERYWHERE.

A RED NIGHTMARE.

1,500 CASUALTIES.

TWO SIDES WINNING AND NO ONE LOSING.

CITIES SACKED.

SCARE STORY OF SOVIET TROOPS NEAR MANCHURIA
(border of China).

KALGAN HOLDS THE KEY.

FENG'S TROOPS HAVE TAKEN TIENSIN.

THE JAPANESE OCCUPY MUKDEN.

CHAN DECAPITATES A GENERAL AND HIS WIFE, AND
THEIR HEADS ARE CARRIED ROUND ON POLES.

Yes. At it again. Poor old China. What a cheery beginning for the year 1926.

For six solid months this sort of thing had been going on. Foreign trade was practically ruined. Many foreign homes had been looted, and many foreigners had been killed. No one knew if their servants were in, or out on strike. Many shops were shut up. Boycott still boycotted, and life generally was most uncomfortable, although amazingly interesting.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PACIFIC AFLAME

Politics bewildering—Camels and dromedaries—Nothing in the world like the streets of Peking—No one looks starved—Scarlet for luck everywhere—Crab-apple necklaces, eaten bead by bead—Likin, literally unfair taxes or graft—Will it ever be eliminated?—Chinese always promise *yes*, and do *no*—Soviet trying to upset the British Empire—The Press in China shows the trend of events—The locksmith's philosophy—The Chinese women's feet—Russia still working up hatred against the foreigner—China still wallows in political dishonesty—Generals who were penniless robbers—More alarming headlines—America crying aloud her love for China—The Middle East and the Far East still agog—China's prodigious future—An impotent Conference—Should China be given autonomy?—No—Tariff treaty signed by Great Britain, Christmas, 1928—It recognised the Nationalist Government at Nanking—But chaotic China will settle down—Japan forges ahead—War in the Pacific inevitable—Why don't our home folk realise their strength—There is nothing the British workman cannot do—Scratched I entered China, bruised I left her—But I brought my leg home—In China I left a faithful friend—Amah hugged her silver coins—No train to take her back to Peking—One of the real gems of China, one of China's simple people—Christmas, 1928—
A retrospect.

ALL one could say of the opening days of that Great Conference in Peking on October 27th, 1925, was that it opened in a land where confusion was worse confounded and in a perfect convulsion of political intrigue. Therein the far travelled Foreign Ministers met China to discuss Tariff Autonomy.

China is truly a wonderful land, and the longer I stayed the less I understood its politics, and the more I loved its quaint, uncivilized ways—the land where the unexpected always happens. But instead of racing ahead she appears to be crawling backwards.

What a calamity! What an ending to a great history!

Did those Congressmen ever peep at those fine wide streets, with their still wider footways, honeycombed all in holes a foot or more deep after the rains. There is nothing in the wide world like the streets of Peking. They teem with humanity. The Chinese are always afoot, or squatting on their heels or on little stools five or six inches high; and at nightfall they go inside the small,

one-roomed, open-fronted, one-storied shops and curl up in rows on K'angs to sleep. But until late at night markets continue on the footway. Whole furniture shops stand outside when it is fine; there is everything and anything to be found on what in an ordinary civilized land would be a pavement. A weird, wonderful, heterogeneous mass is a Peking street.

Camels, really dromedaries with two humps, with small baby camels following behind, were walking through the streets again in the autumn. They had spent the really hot months in Mongolia and were coming back in hundreds to begin their winter trade. Endless black pigs, horrible dogs as in India, small cattle with string muzzles to stop them feeding by the way, small donkeys and Mongolian ponies, rickshaws, water tubs on barrows—anything and everything—all jostle along the streets of Peking. Everything is tumbling down or being washed down; even the old tree trunks have to be fitted up inside with layers of bricks and cement to keep them standing at all.

Yet no one looks starved. There are beggars, of course, and probably some rich ones, for begging often makes mendicants rich. And one thing is strangely noticeable—there are rarely flags. Probably no land displays fewer flags than China. It has a new Republican flag—a five-striped affair of red, yellow, blue, white and black—but it keeps within bounds and is not aggressive. In the Emperor's day flags flew everywhere.

Extraordinarily painted Manchu ladies trundle along in their rickshaws with enormous black silk headdresses, and the colour on their faces is phenomenal, and plastered thickly all over the places where colour is not generally found. Alas, good-looking women in China are in a minority. Neither in looks nor in dainty manners does China compare favourably with Japan, any more than in progress.

Japan, let me repeat again, is the land of progression—China the land of retrogression. Russia the land of destruction.

One delightful touch in China is the scarlet everywhere. It is supposed to bring good luck and keep away evil spirits. Children are dressed in scarlet, or, if not dressed, endued with a scarlet rag somewhere, or a scarlet binding wool to hold out their hair straight, like pencils or quills,

from their heads. And the donkeys of Italy and Sicily wear scarlet trappings for the same reason,—for luck.

Tiny vendors sell scarlet apples from a mat on the ground of the street or a table, and wear necklaces of them round their necks for sale. Children don these tiny red crab apples and gradually eat up all the necklace.

A square white umbrella covering, scarlet signs and tassels and bobs and oddments hang anywhere and everywhere. And among all this strange mixture one suddenly comes upon a beautiful marble balustraded bridge, or a couple of upstanding yellow policemen, with white gaiters and white gloves and bayonets fixed on their rifles.

The next moment one goes backwards and finds seven or eight men, harnessed by yards of strong calico, pulling some horribly heavy cart. All are sweating. Chinese are bathed in perspiration both in summer and winter, with not an ounce of superfluous flesh, and with every muscle taut. They have great endurance, and life has a pretty narrow margin from day to day. A boy of about ten pulling a rickshaw is a sad sight, and not so uncommon as it should be, for youth begins to work far too early. Even toddling children thread beads or carve peach stones in the native-owned shops—sweated labour with a vengeance on every side.

And the crux of the International Conference was not child-labour, but *Likin*. It will be quite easy to change its name, as was done with the dishonest governors called Tu-Tu. Out went the Tu-Tus and in came the Tu-Pans, and behind, all the dishonesty slipped in again; so, having pretended to get rid of the dishonesty of the Tu-Tu governors, and really only changed their name, a new cry started against another form of squeeze.

There was loud talk, with many newspaper paragraphs, about the abolishment of *Likin* all the time I was in China, *Likin* being the exorbitant and varying taxes imposed by each of the twenty-two provinces and each and every town and village. So that in a place a few miles distant the same thing may be 35 per cent. or even higher taxed than in one nearby.

Likin should be abolished, said the gracious Chinese. Yes, by 1929, 12½ per cent. was to be given from the Customs to cover its erratic manoeuvres and replace it. Yes, that was the brilliant suggestion. *Likin* must go.

Who knows? The gain from the Customs is not at all likely to abolish the iniquity and inequality of *Likin*, which, like the Tu-Tus, may merely change its description. and yet China, decayed as she is and seamed with intrigue, retains her strong love and respect for the past, even at personal loss in the present. So the good gentlemen at the Conference drew up sheets of statistics and talked, and did their best all November, and all December, and all January, and methinks the political Chinaman had his tongue in his cheek and had perchance already chosen the new name that was to take the place of *Likin*.*

In those hectic months I spent in China, topsyturvydom continued week by week. Canton and Shanghai shot our men, and Japanese and American men, and six months had seen the rising wave of intelligence, the awakening of China to the fact that she had been duped, and the start of Soviet China against anti-Red Chinese. Those months had shown China that the mole burrowing in their land—till then undetected—was the Bolshevik. He had been brought to light, after doing all that time his deadly work, and Karakhan had returned to his own land to be Foreign Minister for a spell, and tell his people how successful he had been and show them how to begin his campaign elsewhere. Having failed with the British in China, he is trying the British in Britain,

*The new Tariff Treaty between Great Britain and China was signed in Nanking at Christmas, 1928. Great Britain was the FIRST of the Powers to offer tariff autonomy to China (1926), which she only clinched nearly two years later. But knowing China, one wonders, "Will she hold by that treaty any more than she does by the Customs or *Likin* agreements?"

Time will show.

Nanking was stupidly made the new capital by the so-called Nationalists in 1928. It is not really a City, but a large tract of land, with a small percentage of buildings, surrounded by thirty miles of wall, very high and wide. All very fine and large, but minus hotels or the amenities of life to-day.

On the advent of the Nationalists at Peking, no time was lost in proclaiming that Nanking was to be, in future, the Capital. Archives and car loads of documents were transferred South, but a good proportion of the Government office staffs were left behind. The name was changed to Peiping, to indicate that the National Capital had been degraded into a prefectural one.

Hundreds of Civil servants thus summarily dismissed were living in dire distress and, in 1929, 1,200 Peking shops were compelled to give up trading. Fresh supplies, through lack of coal-trains, have been lacking, so that life in Peking has become doubly hard.

and India, and Mosul; but the destruction of the British Empire is his goal.

Does Great Britain wish to be brought to the ruin of Russia and China? Assuredly if the Russians are not turned out, they will turn out our Government.*

Each country they destroy gives them new incentive, and new ideas to attain success. A world-menace to-day, truly. A scourge of deceit, lies, hypocrisy, robbery of the masses, for the cream cakes and champagne of the few.

Nothing shows the trend of events better than newspaper headlines—so here we will again quote a few from September 11th, and it will be seen that things were worse instead of better.

BIBLES PROHIBITED IN HARBIN (by Soviets in a Chinese town).

U.S.A. AIR ROUTE TO HONOLULU FOR NEXT PACIFIC WAR.

ANOTHER RIOT IN SHANGHAI. FRENZIED CROWD INVADE FOREIGN SETTLEMENT.

POLICE ATTACKED WITH BRICKS AND POLES—FIRED HIGH BUT WOUNDED THREE RIOTERS.

AMERICAN DESTROYER DISASTER.

PEKING MASS MEETING ON "UNEQUAL TREATIES." RED ARRESTS IN TOKYO.

FENG'S TROOPS MOVING TOWARDS TIBET.

HANKOW TROUBLES—BRITISH MARINES LAND.

KARAKHAN NEATLY SNUBBED AT HARBIN.

\$30,000 SUMPTUOUS RAILWAY CAR FOR KARAKHAN (The Soviet Ambassador).

PEKING NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PLANS REVENGE. HONAN, TIRING OF AGITATIONS, MAKES READY FOR CONFLICT.

TWO BRITISH JOURNALISTS ROUGHLY HANDLED IN CANTON.

CHINESE VIGOROUSLY ATTACK TREATIES.

BANDITS NEAR RAILWAYS 500 STRONG.

ARMY INVADES SHANSI.

RACE COURSE TURNED INTO AVIATION FIELD.

UNITED STATES MUST MAINTAIN INFLUENCE IN PACIFIC.

RIOTOUS CROWDS LOOKING FOR TROUBLE IN SHANGHAI.

POLICE FIRE—THREE WOUNDED.

BREAK OF YELLOW RIVER BANK.

CHOLERA REPORTED IN PEKING, SHANGHAI, TIENSIN.

Yes, the tumult and fighting seem everlasting, and in this connection I chanced one day to have an amusing

*The Soviet A.R.C.O. was turned out bag and baggage in 1927.

little conversation with a kindly Chinaman in Peking, and give his words verbatim as he mended my trunk.

"China always makee fight," he said.

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"For fun?"

"Big general he makee lots money, small general he no likee. Too muchee big generals wants fight. Fight no good. Plenty money finish. All Chinese poor man—killed. No likee fight."

"Are you glad the great heat has gone?" I continued.

"Poor man no likee cold. Too dear. Must buy cotton—sew-sew in clothes."

"Where does he buy his cotton?" (really a common sort of cotton wool). I asked.

"He buy coolie market. Rich man get new cotton every year. He sell. Poor man buy."

"Must he buy every year?"

"His Missie washee-washee every summer—two—three winter one cotton. Finish."

"Has your wife small China feet?" I queried. A subject that always fascinated me sadly. For these feet are really synonymous with bond-slaves.

"Yes, she have China foots. I no can see."

"Do all the toes double back?"

"I no can see."

"Have you never seen her feet?"

"No China man ever see foots, small foots China woman's."

"You have never seen your wife's feet?"

"No, never see. China mans never see."

"I wonder if the nails grow when they are always walked on?"

"Thinkee so. Every China wife have pair small scissors. Husbands must buy scissors. No can see foots. No China man ever see China wife's foots. Only buy scissors. No makee small foots now."

"And you don't want war?" I harked back.

"No, Missie—China no want war. China want chow-chow. Me 'fraid Feng. He bad man Feng, Peking peoples 'fraid Feng. He come—bring big troubles—"

And this was the political philosophy of one of the people who sat on my floor and mended a lock.

Not many weeks went by before the so-called Christian

General Feng, the handmaiden of Russia, was in full possession of Tientsin, after much fighting, and also of Peking.

He was the Christian humbug.*

Personally I do not believe in new religions in old countries, any more than new wine in old tubs. Every land has adopted the religion that suited it best, and that religion is in the soul and tradition of the people and should stay there. The Russian peasant, once so religious, is being drilled Red. When he enters his "service" he is schooled Red. Communism is poured into his tea, his soup, eaten with his bread, and it lulls him to sleep o' nights. He is spoon-fed on Soviet fables. Told all men are brothers (vide Mr. Karakhan's Imperial coach and the fluffy little lady's green satin and lace). That all money belongs to the Communists. Later he learns that *his* money belongs to the Government and what he does not give is taken from him, just as his father was denuded of his horses. One was enough for any peasant, said Moscow—and with one he was left.

Why work? Why earn money to have two horses or two cows or two anything, when the Government will squeeze one of them? To hire anyone to help on the farm means the farmer is too rich. He is an exploiter. He is an enemy of the Great Commonwealth. He must be denuded of his wealth and punished for his wickedness. So the Government taxes him, and if he can't pay the Government takes the horse.

To go to church is wrong he is told. Religion is a fable. Communism is religion, and atheism is the truth. But the old peasant is slow to move. He does not see much prosperity or happiness round him, so he goes back and tills his land as his forefathers did before him, and as long as he and his family get enough to eat they will leave Soviets and Communism alone, praying that Soviets and Communism will leave them alone in peace. But will they? Power is very sweet, and Russia is working hard in China, especially by working up hatred against the foreigner.

The Chinese really started this Anti-Foreign campaign when they were told to dismiss the Germans and Austrians after the Great War. To dismiss a foreign nation was a

*A year later he visited Moscow, and, like Mrs. Sun Yat Sen, his eyes were opened. But the harm was done.

revelation of power—an awakening. China need never have entered the war, she could have sent coolies without that; and the President never wanted to enter the war, but the Parliament and military did. They gained the vote, and China has been over-military ever since. But she was only an ally in name. Paris decided against race discrimination, but took away China's sovereignty and gave the birthplace of their beloved Confucius to Japan. Naturally this annoyed China, although it is now given back. Both Chinese and Japanese value their national entity, but neither values its individual life.

China meantime wallows in political incompetency, in total absence of rule even among her boys and girls at school. China's hundreds of millions are at work and are content. Their margin of wealth is small, their life is hard; but the present folk at the top have made it far harder. And as the Soviet Government has bled Russia, it is now bleeding China. One sees it on every side. Thousands more of these five hundred million souls will be butchered for the gain of rich and powerful generals who were penniless robbers a few years since, and governors who were nobodies.

And so alarming headlines in all the reputable press persisted.

CANTON TRAIN FIRED ON BY BANDITS.
£329,000 DUE FOREIGN BANKS BY PEKING AND
HANKOW.

CHILI PARTY TUPANS ORGANISE AIR FORCE BY
RECRUITING RUSSIANS.
RUMOURS OF WAR.

SUPPRESSION OF BANDITS.

WAR RUMOURS IN KIANG SU LESS PERSISTENT.
MUNITIONS FOR BANDIT SUPPRESSION IN HUNAN.
NO TARIFF CONFERENCE SHOULD WAR BREAK OUT
IN CHINA.

MARSHAL FENG ORDERS CLOSING OF BRITISH CATTLE-
RAISING DEPOT (CONFISCATION OF 27,000 SHEEP).
SHANTUNG WANTS TUPAN TO SEIZE JAPANESE MINES.
GENERAL CHANG NEEDS FUNDS TO MAINTAIN TROOPS.
AMERICAN-JAPANESE-CHINESE WIRELESS DEADLOCK.
SHANGHAI ARMED AGAIN.

CIVIL WAR IN CHINA (TOKYO FOREIGN OFFICE DE-
CLARES OUTBREAK IMMINENT. JAPAN TO OBSERVE
NEUTRALITY).

PEKING STUDENTS' PARADE PREVENTED.
LOCAL RUSSIAN ARRESTED.

BANDIT OUTRAGE NEAR CANTON.
AMMUNITION TO EXTIRPATE BANDITS.
EIGHTEEN LABOUR UNIONS CLOSED IN SHANGHAI.
CANTON OUTRAGE. BRITISH JOURNALISTS INCARCERATED BY STRIKERS—SEVENTEEN HOURS
CHAINED IN A CELL.—RESCUED BY WHAMPOA
CADETS.

CHINESE EXPELLED FROM AMERICA.

And while America is crying aloud in China her love for China, she is deporting two hundred Chinese from New York, and imprisoning five hundred by way of showing her love for the "Chink" as they call them, at the same time they are promoting the immigration of Chinese women into U.S.A., as there are only 10,000 women out of the 67,000 Chinese in that country. And, judging by the number of mixed-race Chinese-Americans running about New York and San Francisco, this order has come none too soon. And all the time the U.S.A. is steadily arming.

Oh America, America, how charming you would be, were it not for your political humbug, and your Pacific Ocean camouflage.

The great American Ambassador Page said of us during the war :

"I have never seen such grim resolution."

And little humble "me" reiterates that phrase and predicts that the British Empire will be greater than ever before—and thanks to the Locarno Pact, signed in London, peace will reign in Europe.

But alas, the Middle East and the Far East are still agog.

Even with a cursory knowledge of China—knowledge gleaned from a couple of visits lasting several months : one can but be cursory on such a vast land and stupendous population—she impresses the least impressionable with POWER—STRENGTH—MAGNITUDE.

China has a prodigious future. But China, under various impotent Republics as she is to-day, is a canker. No one knows what will happen next, no one knows who will rule in a month, no one knows his own future, and certainly cannot plan for his children.

China lived on tradition—China reveres ancestry. China, till lately, progressed under a great and strong woman, one of the most remarkable women in all history.

China appreciates wise leadership and honours habits, customs and monarchy. And yet China is wallowing in a rut of hopelessness and unstable rule, class war, financial war, revolution. No one knows where he is, or what to-morrow will bring forth. Its chaos makes it all the more interesting at the moment for the onlooker, but they are frightful times to live in for the poor Chinese.

Those last days of the year 1925 China hung in the balance. The Conference delegates had arrived. The peace and quiet assured for three or four weeks ; all the pinkwash ; all the bad, wicked words of hate duly painted out ; everything that Peking could do had been done. BUT China is still unstable. The military leaders still unreliable.

Peking issues mandates and orders and commands. No one obeys.

The important Conference, like every other attempt at law and order in China, was doomed.

The police were powerless. Order did not reign, and while the Conference struggled to sit and arrange things for China's benefit, she continued to show them how unable to rule she was, by allowing two armies to form up on a fifty-five mile front for Civil War just outside Peking. And again, to show how incapable China is of protecting anyone, she allowed the International train from Tientsin to be fired on and held up, and not move for sixteen days.

Comedy, eh? Topsyturvydom. Jig-saw puzzle. What you will. But this is China.

The wonder is that the Peking Government had been allowed quietly to whitewash her walls, and obliterate her children's vindictive anti-foreign impudence from her gates, and had even been allowed to flood the Press for three whole weeks with the peacefulness of China, or keep all warring factors quiet and for that long, but the dykes had burst again and the waters of uncontrolled ravage overspread the country almost before the Conference had sat down in its seats.

It arrived amid such-like head-lines—October 20th, 1925 :

FEARS THAT CUSTOMS PARLEY WILL NOT BE HELD.
HUPEH DECLARES INDEPENDENCE.
WAR LORDS' SCHEMES.

THE PACIFIC AFLAME
CIVIL WAR IN CHINA CERTAIN.
WAR IMMINENT.
WU PEI FU WANTS WAR.
SERIOUS TURN OF EVENTS

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and so on.

China herself answered the question: "Should China be given autonomy?" No. There is no China. It is a pin-cushion of sawdust, and four hundred million pins stick in it, with some big pins, and twenty-two provinces of different coloured pins, with twenty-two large-headed pins as Tupans (governors), and another dozen still longer pins, and, above all, four large hat-pins, three being rival generals, and the fourth the so-called President, but his hat-pin is not quite so big as the many generals', so they can fight over his head, and the victor can take his place.

November was quickly followed by December and Christmas. The children were already sewn into cotton-wool, there to remain till May or June. The windows were already thickly papered for the cold for the winter. All the little paper panes which had been pushed through to let in air during the heat, now had to be closed tightly again to keep out ice-bound air.

Christmas and skating and sledges in the north, and even moderate cold in the south, heralded winter, and still China squabbled, and the soldiers' fans were replaced by umbrellas, railways were demoralized and armies moved.

Still nobody knew what was coming next.

The Conference still Conferenced, and Great Britain offered much to China. She refused.

China still persistently showed how incapable she was of managing her own affairs and how unstable she had made life for everyone else. And still the four hundred millions plodded on unheeding and struggled for their daily bread, although sewn into their winter cotton-wool suits. That was China, just a huge rudderless ship.*

*April, 1926, Peking was cut off from everything except wireless for many weeks. And Russia was quarreling among herself. Dzerzhinsky, the death warrant ruffian, died, or was poisoned (?), July 19th, 1926; a week later, Zinovieff was expelled from office! Trotsky was sent to the wilds "for his health!" Jealousy and quarreling among themselves. But Stalin still dictated.

Dictators invariably fall or are killed in the end; but meantime in a few years they make or mar their country, because one man holds the helm.

Chaotic China will settle down. The Soviets have had their day. Their power is waning. China's many hundred million people take no interest in Soviets or students or civil wars or squabbling generals or governors (Tupans)—they plod along, and gradually the country will settle down under one of these warring powers (which one is still uncertain), and having lost trade and prestige will work hard to reinstate herself, and by 1930 may have forged perceptibly ahead. But

- A. She must learn to rule.
- B. She must learn to obey.
- C. She must learn to be honest.

Her dishonesty begins below and ends in full force with the robbery of "likin" (taxes), which will take generations to abolish, no matter how glib the promises. "Squeeze" is in the blood. Having done these three things, it will then take China two hundred years from these chaotic conditions to become a first-class power in the real meaning of a first-class power, because, unlike Russia, she has never been a modern first-class power. Her power was in the long-dead past.

Meantime Japan is simply forging ahead. Political troubles may hold her up; but not for long. She has gone as far forwards in two years as Russia has gone backwards. When the Japan-American war comes Japan will win. Honolulu and the Philippines may be the battleground. The States are arming those islands and Panama (there were five American generals when I was there), and the coast itself, in spite of the Washington Conference.

Since the murder of Chang-Tso-Lin, 1928, Japan has been tightening her hold on the vast and prosperous Manchuria, which has an area of 365,000 square miles and a population of 26,000,000. Japan's mining, railway and

Mussolini brought Italy to wealth and power, in spite of many failures. Stalin brought Russia to unutterable degradation and ruin. Bankrupt coffers, demoralised people, food queues and famine.

Mussolini worked hand in hand with his Monarch and Pope. Stalin and his party had murdered monarchy and brushed religion aside. Chimneys smoke, and cultivated land gives forth her best, while faces smile in Italy. Factories are derelict, the once fertile land has gone to ruin in Russia, and I never saw a smile.

China has been heading to ruin, but she will pull up, and may yet become the greatest power in the Pacific Ocean, which now takes such a prominent place in the world's history.

trade interests in this Province are great and she has shown herself capable of combining with the Chinese inhabitants to the mutual benefit of both Nationalities. When hints arose in the summer of 1928 that Japan was seeking to establish a Protectorate over Manchuria, she lost no time in disavowing any such pretensions, but there are not wanting signs and portents that, rather than see Manchuria mishandled under Chang-Tso-Lin's successor (the youthful General Chang Hsueh Liang) or overruled by the Nanking Nationalist Party, the Japanese Government will not scruple to use the same stern measures it recently employed to protect the interests of her nationals in Shantung, where the mailed fist grappled promptly and successfully with General Chiang Kai-shek's troops, who were over-running the Province. The War Lord's son, Chang Hsueh-Liang, is becoming an important factor. He rules North Manchuria. North and South Manchuria are the most prosperous parts of all China today. Japan (by lease of 99 years) rules South Manchuria. He is therefore important to Japan as an Ally, and equally important to the Chinese Nationalist Government. In October, 1928, he joined the Nationalist Party in Nanking. This may have a far-reaching influence.

Japan possesses a virile and astute body of diplomats who are careful to avoid coming out into the open, but at the back of her mind all the time, as far as China is concerned, there is an Oriental Monro policy and the day that Washington forgets this, will see Mr. Kellogg's Peace Pact shattered—in the Far East at any rate.

The Pacific is aflame. War will eventually come in those far off seas before many years go by. Meantime our British Empire grows greater and greater.

If only our home-folk could realize what a great thing, what a great possession, what a wondrous strength for world-good, honesty of purpose, and justice in execution, this British Empire is, they would be as keen to go on building up that Empire as these Soviets are in their desire to destroy the whole world to the condition of their own dire straits, so that they may wear fine clothes and eat cream chocolates in other lands with the shamelessness of the cuckoo.

We can all do our bit. In fact it is the humble "We's" who really do the bits that make the mighty whole. Strikes lead nowhere. They merely injure the innocent.

The tragedy of Russia and the comedy of China emphasize this.

Coal quarrels do no good. They merely allow other countries to undersell us, and beat us at our own game. They make our women and children suffer, because agitators naturally agitate when agitation is their sole source of income. Shipyard boycotts do no good; they merely force the ships and the pay into other ports, and other nations make the money.

No, no. It won't do. We *must* settle down, and work and work hard and willingly in this dear little island of ours. People are beginning to laugh at us—to be sarcastic at our incapacity to-day to keep our own trades going. We are losing trade, and we are losing prestige. It won't do. Surely we are not going to let Japan and Italy win the race in the world's markets?

There is nothing a British workman can't do, and there is nothing a British woman cannot carry through—I feel sure of that. Well, let us do it. And do it for the good of the British Empire and the good of the World Peace.

The more I wander the more I feel we are the most truly democratic people on earth. We are the freest, and we have a crown for our jewel, and to-day that is the crown of true loyalty and royalty. And in nearly every country I have visited the word President stands for political corruption.

Our British workman is a fine creature, and I cannot believe he will allow Russia to steal from Russian children their very food and homes, to wage propaganda outside. The Russian churches have been despoiled of their wonderful treasures; wealthy Russian homes have been robbed of all their ancestral heirlooms; museums have been looted—and all this for the sake of furthering communistic propaganda. Nothing would seem to be sacred to these Bolshevik spoliators of traditional property.

Look out, my friends. The Soviet mole burrows underground. He did in China. Not till after my arrival and with the advent of the mysterious diplomat fresh from the Secret May (1925) Sessions in Moscow did he openly show his nose above ground.

The Soviet mole is burrowing in Great Britain to-day. He throws up lumps of earth here and there. The coal strike "ended" by a disastrous sop of twenty millions

of taxpayers' money, which, instead of ending the matter boldly, merely put off the evil day, to reappear in a few months at the mole's bidding.

One strike after another, all engineered by Moscow, and the stolid British workman still innocent of the fact.

An Ambassador in London on the understanding Russia would cease all anti-British propaganda in the Empire, instead of which he at once redoubled his attentions. Sovietism is a stealthy drug. An insidious poison. Its power is its secrecy. Its quiet persistent undermining. Its result? (Ambassador dismissed 1927).

The decay of Russia, her degradation and despair are the result.

And when I left China, China was still fighting. She was fighting twenty-two months before when I left her shores, in fact she has been fighting ever since 1912.

I returned to find Anti-Foreigner war instead. And left later with two Conferences sitting, trying to help China to some peaceable solution of her troubles, and another Civil War in being. China had an enormous chance to right not only herself, but to right China with the whole world.

Had she eschewed Civil War as requested by the Chief Executive (Acting-President); had she come forward with her witnesses and helped the judicial inquiry at Shanghai with the whole question of origin and rights and wrongs of the 30th May, 1925 affair, instead of funkng an open inquiry; had she co-operated with the Tariff Conference at Peking, where the full ratification of the Washington Conference was to be discussed, China might have gained much, but, like a naughty child, she sulked at the Shanghai judicial inquiry, and put forward preposterous suggestions in Peking, and fought outside the city gates.

Scratched I entered China, owing to the Siberian Railway accident, and, terrible to relate, many months later, bruised I left China. It sounds horrible, doesn't it? But it is true, and certainly a strange coincidence. But the intervening period had been free from disaster and blemishes. The Siberian railway accident had skinned my arm and badly hurt my leg by throwing me from my bunk on to the obtruding locks of suitcases that

had descended when the impact came. Those scratches remained for months, only to be intensified by a fall down highly polished stairs.

The reason I left China bruised was the honesty of purpose and vigour of foot-polish of good Chinese servants, Lord Li's "Boys," who, between receiving European guests, apparently polish the floor.

A fall in the dark down uncarpeted highly-polished wooden stairs left bruises and strains, and water on the knee that evoked a somewhat cruel remark from the doctor, when I said :

"After twelve days surely that leg should not be black and blue and swollen like that ? "

"My dear lady, it will take twelve weeks, perhaps twelve months before it is well—and I much fear your travelling off alone like this."

"But I must go. I have proof sheets to correct on the way home."

"I know, I know, but it would have been better for you to have broken it, as such a fall deserved, after the Siberian damage, so be careful."

Alone I started by Japan and Canada—half round this world, in fact—to London and managed to bring the leg—so nearly left in China—back with me.

"He travels the farthest who travels alone," says Kipling.

And for seven long years I have "travelled alone."

And yet not altogether alone, for, as Kipling says :

"A friend at a pinch is a friend indeed" ("L'Envoi"), and that friend, man or woman, God bless them, has always been at hand.

And in China I left a very faithful friend.

Poor old Amah, she thought her last hour had come. I had paid her thirty-four Mexican dollars (nearly £4) in silver and implored her not to get it stolen. She had counted it again and again on the sofa, loath to part with the big heavy silver coins, and rolled and re-rolled it up in her pocket-handkerchief. She refused to have notes.

When we left Peking I had promised—it will be remembered—to send her back by train. We had come down by what proved to be the last train, a shabby horrid affair full of soldiers. But warring generals had decreed otherwise, and there was no train at all to take the dear

old thing to her northern home. So she had to go by sea, and even wait a considerable time for that privilege. And I sailed away, alas, to learn that even the International train from Tientsin to Peking, a distance of three hours from the Tientsin port, was also cut against all International agreement, and at the very time the Conference was sitting and China was asking for autonomy. Amusing. But not for poor old Amah.

Poor Amah was overpowered by the sight of my big ocean liner. She turned positively pale. Its size appalled her. She became panic-stricken and every moment appeared more apprehensive of being borne away over the ocean somewhere, anywhere, nowhere.

We had been such excellent friends, in spite of our limited vocabulary, for so many months, but all smiles left her usually smiling face until she was back on the tender; and then dear old Amah smiled once more, and waved her little handkerchief and evidently felt she was saved from an ocean voyage. Poor dear.

And how I miss her. One of the real gems of China, one of China's simple people.

MARCH, 1929

A RETROSPECT

Since my adventurous journey came to an end, anarchical and chaotic China has continued on her way. The Nationalist troops after various successes over the Yangtze Ports gave indications that Shanghai would be a rich fat prize to capture. And so it would be, with all its hoards of silver, its prosperous abundance of everything, for is it not the gateway through which all the imports and exports of this great country pass? But the Foreign Community was alert; trenches were dug and manned by the Infantry and Artillery of the Shanghai Volunteer Force, an International body, containing the flower of Shanghai's youth, and comprising the finest Volunteer Force in the world, even including a full-strength Chinese Company.

The Powers finally responded to the warnings given, and an Expeditionary Force was sent out from Great Britain. These regiments landed in fighting trim, in the spring of 1926, and were at once sent to man the defences arranged by their leader Major General Sir John

Duncan. They barely arrived in the nick of time, for General Chiang Kai-shek's troops were already knocking at the door to the extent of wounding several British, and killing an Indian soldier. Other countries sent detachments. Japanese, French and American soldiers, while Italy, Spain, Holland and Portugal landed parties of fighting sailors, and standing over all as a protection, Naval guns on battleships and cruisers were watchful and ready. The International troops were amalgamated into the Shanghai Defence Force, the very moral weight of which prevented further fighting. The conduct of our soldiers in Shanghai, their smartness, efficiency and good discipline, did much to stop the steady fall of British prestige. The mere sight of British boots and guns did the trick.

After travelling over a hundred thousand miles since the war, twice round the world,—once from the east, and once from the west,—and side tracking from Northern India to Central Africa, from Mongolia to Java and Ceylon—after arctic cold and tropical heat, and rains, barbed wire and gun shots, after filth and fever, after earthquakes, snakes and strain,—after writing two books and giving three "one man" exhibitions of the pictures I painted during those travels,* I came back to London to settle down in my home town.

Before I was even settled in my little flat my second, and last son, was killed—for the Country.

For two whole years I only went outside the four mile London radius half-a-dozen times, and never slept one single night away. That shows what the strain and discomfort coupled with ceaseless work of all these adventures really had meant.

And as I look over the balcony of my flat across great prosperous London and watch, down below, the life of the streets and all the myriad busy folks passing to and fro, I think of their average contented lot, and mentally conjure up visions of oppressed and poverty-stricken Russia where there are none of the blessings which we enjoy.

I look further Eastward and the picture rises to my

*Two Exhibitions at the Alpine Gallery, London: one at the Galeries Georges Petit, Paris.

eye of many millions of starving Chinese. I think of the difficulties into which large districts are plunged by the cruel banditry which is rife in town, village and country, and I long for news to show that the Chinese Nationalist Government is going to effect any real improvement in the administration of the country. Yet China will recover long before Russia. Her population is larger. Her wealth is greater.

I cast my eyes westward and think of the South American States straining at each other, and I see the United States becoming embroiled in Nicaraguan difficulties and having trouble with Central and Latin America.

Then my eye comes back to this dear murky London and rests, all the more contentedly, on her spires and chimneys.

For do not let us forget that, mites though we be, you and I, we have the pride and privilege of being part of the far flung British Empire—the Greatest Power on God's earth. That means wider lands and more natural resources than all the Americas bunched together. It means more opportunity to prosper for those who work. It means a square deal for all; and the good fortune of living our lives under well-ordered conditions.

For the moment : Je suis : j'y reste.

THE END

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Reviews of Books by Mrs. Alec-Tweedie

A Woman on Four Battle Fronts.

Experiences in motor cars over 991 miles of war ploughed lands, where she made many sketches for an American Syndicate.

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